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# CIVILIAN MORALE UNDER AERIAL BOMBARDMENT

1914 - 1939

PART II

Prepared by  
Hilton P. Goss, Ph.D.  
December 1948

AIR UNIVERSITY



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# **NOTE ON PART I**

Because of binding problems, this study has been divided into two sections. Chapters I - IV are to be found in Part I which forms a separate volume.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: THE FIRST PHASE

1936 - 1937

Every experience which civilian populations had had with aerial bombardment between 1914 and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 was dwarfed by the events of the Civil War in Spain. This struggle, which lasted from July 1936 until the Spring of 1939, served as a testing ground for the later war inasmuch as the Spanish conflict soon involved more than the opposing political groups of Spain itself. At least three major European powers — Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union — contributed personnel and materiel in substantial amounts to the fighting. And a number of individuals of other nationalities participated in the campaigns or played an active role in the bitter warfare which resulted in the ultimate defeat of the Spanish Republican government.

The library shelves of the world are crowded with accounts and appraisals of the Spanish Civil War. From every angle — political, social, economic, military, psychological, and ideological — the events and implications of this three-year conflict have been discussed, described, and dissected. Through the avenues of the daily press, the newsreels, the radio, government documents, books, pamphlets, and public speeches the causes and effects of the war have been presented

Conceivably, the flood would still be pouring forth in only slightly diminished volume had not the more terrible events of 1939-1945 provoked an even greater inundation.

In all this spate of words and pictures, aerial bombardment of civilian populations during the Spanish war received some attention. But, in the main, the military campaigns and the international politics of the struggle won the greater publicity. There were reasons for this. For all its use of new weapons and accelerated movement, the Spanish war was an old time war. It has been characterized as a war of improvisation, and this to a degree it certainly was.<sup>1</sup> The struggle was fought out in a comparatively small area and with limited numbers when one sets it against the canvas of wars of the past. There were long periods when no major actions were in progress, and on many occasions even minor skirmishes occurred with infrequency. For all the hullabaloo aroused by the Spanish Civil War, it could scarcely be called one of the great wars of history in terms of numbers involved, territory overrun, or military problems presented. It was great only in its impact upon a world rushing toward self-destruction.

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<sup>1</sup>Gen Duval writes: "Il n'y a . . . aucune conclusion à tirer d'une organisation qui n'a pas été la conséquence d'un choix, mais d'une nécessité." Général Duval, Les Leçons de la guerre d'Espagne, 1938, p 233. See also Spaulding, op. cit., p 52, which quotes a German Major Welsch as saying: "This Spanish war is an affair of shortages and improvisations. . . ."

Aerial warfare during the three years of fighting received many headlines and much attention from the public, as well as from the military observers of all nations. With the example of the Italians in Abyssinia fresh in mind, much was expected of the aeroplane in the Spanish war. It is for the technicians to say to what extent the experiences of the 1936-1939 conflict added to the knowledge of the limitations and capabilities of aircraft in war. There appears to have been plenty of speculation on these subjects, if very little clear conclusion. Most of the aviation and military periodicals engaged in long discussions of the technical and tactical aspects of the war in the air. But the major concern of this examination is the lengths to which aerial bombardment of civilian populations was carried out and the effect this method of attack had upon the morale of the noncombatant elements of the Spanish nation.

The most widely accepted generalization is that the Spanish people, whether they were in sympathy with the Government or the rebel cause, whether they lived in towns or villages on the one side or the other of the fight, reacted to the bombardments in very much the same fashion.<sup>2</sup> Whether

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<sup>2</sup>The rebels were variously called Whites, Insurgents, Nationalists, Rightists, Fascists, Rebels, Falangists, and other less frequently used terms. Those who supported the successive governments which opposed the rebellion were usually designated as Reds, Loyalists, Government, Leftists, Communists, Anarchists, Anti-Clericals, and other names.

Loyalist or Insurgent, the Spanish people subjected to aerial bombardment showed a uniformly strong tendency to stiffen their resistance against the enemy when they were the victims of attack from the skies. During the war the publicists and apologists for each of the opposing factions circulated this finding as widely as possible, both within their own camp and to the world at large. However, both Government and Rebel authorities claimed that only their own adherents supported this generality, and that the other side was thoroughly demoralized by the inability or unwillingness of civilian populations to carry on the war in the face of threatened or actual attack from the air. That there was a good deal of truth in all these assertions, and that there were aspects of the effects of aerial bombardment upon the civilian populations not covered by so brief an estimate are facts which are undeniable, even though this, again, is a generalization.

To move from the general to the particular is to prove the assertion of a number of observers that the Spanish Civil War was no proper test of the way large masses of people would react to aerial bombardment. The bombing at its most

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For the sake of uniformity, and to avoid confusion as much as possible, the terms Insurgents and Loyalists will commonly be used in these chapters, unless for the sake of clarity and euphony the terms Franco and anti-Franco, or Rebel and Government seem preferable. The rebelling forces preferred the name Nationalist, but this seems too easily confused with Loyalist to be used here.

severe and prolonged was but a feeble show compared with what happened in Britain, Germany, and Japan, for example, a few years later. However, there are in the Spanish conflict enough indications of the types of behavior of civilians under the stresses of air raids to give point to a close examination of the successive stages of warfare from the air. To afford a cumulative view of these effects it has seemed best to present the examples of air attack upon civilian populations in a chronological fashion. It is clear that the impact of a single raid, however revealing its effects may be, is rather meaningless without a consideration of what has gone before, and, even more, with what follows afterward. And, in the Spanish conflict as much as in the later worldwide war, it was the cumulative rather than the isolated element which held the significance.

At the outset of the rebellion, the Spanish Air Force, small and ill-equipped, remained loyal to the constituted government, although a number of its officers escaped in the first few days to join the Insurgent movement. General Francisco Franco, who shortly after the outbreak of the revolt became the leader of the anti-Government forces, was not an aviator, but he had apparently an early appreciation of the role aviation could play in the planned overthrow of the Madrid government and quickly called it to his assistance. The man originally slated to head the revolt was

General José Sanjuro, but he was killed in a plane crash at Lisbon on 20 July 1936, the third day of the uprising, while flying to Spain to take command. General Franco, who had been flown from his post in the Canary Islands to Spanish Morocco at the outbreak of the insurrection,<sup>3</sup> immediately was received as leader of the movement. Within the next few days the revolt had effectively neutralized the government outposts in Morocco, and Franco, with the aid of German planes, transported Spanish Foreign Legion and Moorish troops to the mainland where the revolt had met with a number of early reverses.<sup>4</sup>

The Madrid government did not have the airpower to oppose this troop carrier shuttle employed by Franco, and the areas of the Mediterranean coast south of Sevilla were generally in Insurgent hands, so the landings from Africa were unopposed. As a result of these and other factors, the uprising which

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<sup>3</sup>The story of this flight, in a small English cabin plane with an English pilot, makes interesting reading. It is best told in Reynolds and Eleanor Packard, Balcony Empire, 1942, pp 37-40. See also A. Plenn, Wind in the Olive Trees, 1946, pp 22-23.

<sup>4</sup>According to one German account, on 26 July 1936, Gen Milch, in conference with Gens Wilberg, Kesselring, and Stumpf, announced Gen Göring's agreement with Gen Franco to make available a fleet of Junker 52 transport planes with German "volunteer personnel" to ferry the troops from Tetuan to Sevilla. This arrangement was made under conditions of the most strict secrecy. H. Bongartz, Luftmacht Deutschland, 1943, Vol I, p 123. C. Foltz, Jr., The Masquerade in Spain, 1948, pp 47-48, says that Hitler sent 30 transport planes to do this work and that on 28 July they unloaded Spanish Foreign Legionnaires at the Sevilla airport. See also W. Beumelburg, Kampf um Spanien, 1940, pp 22-25. There is some evidence that Italian planes were also made available to Franco for these early transport activities from Spanish Morocco.

had been planned as a military coup d'état against the government became a civil war when many provinces remained loyal to Madrid, and yet the constituted Spanish government was not able to stamp out the widespread fires of revolt which had been kindled by the action of the army officers who had secretly planned the movement, and by certain groups among the royalists, clergy, and propertied classes who supported the insurrection once it had broken into the open.

Which side began aerial bombardment of civilian areas and populations is a matter of dispute. Each side accused the other, and apparently with some reason. As early as the first week of the struggle, General Franco was quoted as having charged that the Madrid government was "sending its planes to bombard cities and towns without defense, killing women and children. . . ."<sup>5</sup> Franco's reference was evidently to the reported bombing of the Spanish military stronghold of Tetuan in Morocco on 20 July 1936 which claimed twenty victims, three of them children.<sup>6</sup> This seems to be the first

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<sup>5</sup>Time, XXVIII:25, 27 Jul 1936. Franco, still in Morocco at this time, added: "We will demand accounts from them as well as from those still on the fence . . .," meaning the provinces and individuals who had not yet joined the revolt. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Capt Bauer, "Impressions et expériences de la guerre d'Espagne," Revue Militaire Suisse, Feb 1938, digested in The Command and Staff School Quarterly Review of Military Literature, XVIII:88, Sep 1938. According to A. Koestler, Spanish Testament, 1937, pp 70-71, a Government plane dropped six bombs on the Military Headquarters at Tetuan on 28 July and a seventh bomb on the Larache aerodrome. This, he says, resulted in the protest and manifesto issued by Franco.



instance of bombing by Government aeroplanes, although an alleged attack upon the Moroccan port of Ceuta in late July is often cited as equally conclusive evidence of the Madrid government's culpability in this connection.<sup>7</sup>

Another incident cited to show that the Loyalist side was the first to use aerial bombardment as an offensive weapon was the accusation that Catalonian planes raided Huesca and Saragossa on 21 July.<sup>8</sup> Since Huesca was an important outpost protecting the vital rail and distribution center of Saragossa, these raids may have had legitimate military objectives.

A British correspondent, H. G. Cardozo, tells of being in the town of Soria, which he locates at about 40 miles north of the Guadarama mountains which ring Madrid, shortly after an air attack in July. He reports that the "Red" planes dropped "small and clumsy" bombs which killed a score of individuals in the village. He did not witness that particular raid, but was on the ground in time for the second visit of three planes a short while after the first bombing. This time, he says, the government planes dropped a score of light bombs on motor traffic congesting the streets, "but

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<sup>7</sup>Gen Niessel, "Les Bombardements aériens en Espagne," La France Militaire, 1 Sep 1938, digested in The Command and Staff School Quarterly Review of Military Literature, XIX:101, Mar 1939.

<sup>8</sup>E. A. Peers, Catalonia Infelix, 1937, p 262. No mention is made of the number of casualties, if any, or of effects upon civilian morale.

again doing very little real damage."<sup>9</sup>

Apparently the first really severe raid of the war came on 27 July when, according to an English witness, Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, Franco's planes bombed a working-class section of Malaga, killing 40 and wounding 150, mostly women and children. So great was the anger of the Malagueños that a mob marched to a local prison, took out forty-five inmates, and shot them as a reprisal.<sup>10</sup> This is the first evidence of the reaction of civilian populations to bombardment of predominately non-military areas. In each of these early cases — Tetuan, Ceuta, Huesca, Saragossa, Soria, Malaga — the town was important as a transportation or garrison center and the planes, conceivably, might have been aiming at military concentrations of troops or supplies. That the bombs were dropped in residential areas or on busy thoroughfares might have been claimed, by either side, as accidental. Since the practice persisted throughout the war, however, it is

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<sup>9</sup>H. G. Cardozo, The March of a Nation, 1937, pp 33-34. He further remarks that he found the anti-aircraft volleys fired at the planes by "excited volunteers" more alarming than the dropping bombs. If this town of Soria is the same as the provincial capital and rail junction given on standard maps of Spain, Mr Cardozo has his mileage wrong. Soria, on the maps, is about 115 miles northeast of Madrid and some 1.1 miles by rail, and lies 91 miles by rail southeast of Burgos, not very near the Guaderamas.

<sup>10</sup>Duchess of Atholl, Searchlight on Spain, 3rd ed., 1938, p 85. Quoting Mitchell's book, My House in Malaga, the Duchess of Atholl says, "Even so, 'some attempt at selection was made, the names of the victims being called from a prepared list'" [of rebel sympathizers and suspected Rightists]. Ibid.

doubtful that such a defense, after the act, would receive much support from the side attacked.

If these are the first, as they certainly are among the earliest, incidents of this sort, then the Madrid government probably cannot escape the blame for having cast the initial bomb. There were, however, reasons, if not extenuating ones, for the fact that the Franco forces did not strike in this manner until after they had been attacked themselves. In the early weeks of the war large sections of Spain went over to the Rebels — much of the provinces of Andalusia, Valencia, Valladolid, Burgos, and Aragon, as well as the important cities of Sevilla, Salamanca, Toledo, Saragossa, Granada, and Cadiz — as did the outlying points which could be used as Insurgent bases, for example the Balearic Isles, Morocco, and the Canaries. Madrid, therefore, without a sizable and loyal army and navy could not hope to retake these large segments of the Republic by ground and sea action. The only hope of crushing the revolt with speed lay in the disruption of transportation, communications, and the ordinary processes of communal life. Too, the prevention of the junction and concentration of Franco's widely separated supporters had to be attempted and the only way for Madrid to do this quickly was through the air.

General Franco already, in the last week of July, had air supremacy over most of the Mediterranean coast of Spain

west of Valencia through the support of German and Italian fliers using their own planes and often wearing their own countries' uniforms, although Hitler and Mussolini were ostensibly neutral at the time and, in fact, had signed the non-intervention agreement proposed by France and Britain. Had Franco employed his air forces to attack the Government strongholds of Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, and the Basque provinces in the north, he not only would have spread his aerial resources very thin, but he would have antagonized as well the populations of these vital regions which he was anxious to win over quickly. If he could gain control of the larger centers before the Government could organize its resistance, the chances for the success of his insurrection would be almost certain. Therefore, he had no wish to devastate these industrial and political capitals of the Spanish peninsula. His cause was weak enough among the middle class populations of Madrid and Barcelona and it was even weaker with the working proletariat in the few industrial regions of Spain, most of whom opposed the revolt for ideological as well as for economic reasons.

Franco, at the outset, had everything to lose from aerial attacks on the major Government areas, and even upon the means of transportation. On the other hand, the Madrid forces, while they ran the risk of alienating support in a few populous centers of the country by resorting to aerial

bombardment, had a wider range of choice than did Franco, since the rural and economically backward regions of the south and central portions of Spain were much less sympathetic toward the socialist-minded Republican government than they were toward the fascistically-inclined monarchist, clerical, and aristocratic elements which threw their support to the army officers who engineered the insurrection. The choice, such as it was, apparently lay with Madrid and, for whatever reason, the Spanish Republican government elected to take the risk of being the first to resort to aerial bombardment of centers where civilians might suffer from the results.

However, the Loyalists were not so callous as to disregard the implications of war against defenseless civilians.<sup>11</sup> So, even the earliest air attacks were directed principally against "military" targets; the fact that civilians were endangered was incidental and unintentional, if we are to believe official protestations. And the Franco forces, likewise, deplored the injuries to civilians following the early raids made by their bombing planes. As soon as it was clear that aerial bombardment of civilian areas — whether of military importance or not always being a subject for

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<sup>11</sup>" . . . Loyalist aviators have had the strictest orders since early in the war not to bomb civilian objectives or cities and towns back of the lines — and those orders have been obeyed within a normal margin of errors." Matthews, op. cit., p 307.

debate — would be an actual, if not admitted, part of the strategy of each side, the pattern was set. Planes flew over settled areas, dropped their bombs, killed and injured men, women, and children, damaged property, and, perhaps, hit a truly military objective in the process. Of course, where planes attacked front lines, marching or bivouacked troops, and supply lines, the issue was clear. But in a civil war, more than in any other kind, who is to say where is the front, what is a bivouac, and how thin is a supply line? And there is even evidence that sometimes aeroplanes bombed and strafed troops of their own forces, not knowing that the enemy had retreated from a certain position, or because of poor visibility.<sup>12</sup>

The first reports of aerial bombardments seem to be devoid of information as to their effects upon the civilian populations. They give numbers and dates, casualties, if any, but do not tell of the effects. Several accounts say that bombs were "dropped on" Tetuan, Algeciras, Cadiz, Saragossa, but do not always mention whether there were legitimate military objectives in the vicinity and say little about the behavior of civilians.<sup>13</sup> One of the first of the many

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<sup>12</sup>For examples see C. Salter, *op. cit.*, p 40, and Beumelburg, *op. cit.*, p 96.

<sup>13</sup>See, for example, the excellent coverage of the war by the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, which reported bombings each day, but in the accounts examined for the early days of the war gave little in the way of particulars, while

interesting observations of civilian behavior followed an attack by bombers sent from Barcelona by the Catalan government to attack the Rebel concentrations at Saragossa. This appeared in the English aviation periodical Flight, and reads as follows:

. . . so far from intimidating the people of the town, the raiders have proved to be excellent recruiting sergeants. The townsmen have been infuriated and have hastened to enlist. That may be because the damage done by bombs has been small. It may be that, if a city were subjected to a systematic bombing by a large force of regulars, the people would clamor for surrender. If so, it would be the first time in history that a virile nation had been beaten by "frightfulness."<sup>14</sup>

Rebel planes appeared over the north Spanish resort and summer capital city of San Sebastian several times in August and on the 13th "five new Italian planes bombed the town."<sup>15</sup> There is no indication as to casualties or other effects. On the following day more Rebel planes were back, but they apparently dropped only leaflets demanding the immediate

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deprecating the discrepancies in the reports received; the New York Times for the same period, 19 July - 31 July 1936, mentioned fewer bombings and did not expand upon the bare facts. Possibly the strict censorship of news reports emanating from Spain at this time may have been responsible for the brevity of accounts of bombings.

<sup>14</sup>"The Bombing of Saragossa," Flight, XXX:195, 20 Aug 1936. It is not clear whether the raid referred to was that of the 21st, 22nd, 23rd, or 24th of July, on each of which days attacks were made against Saragossa. On the 24th the objective was the Rebel barracks, according to the New York Times, 25 July 1936.

<sup>15</sup>G. L. Steer, The Tree of Gernika, 1938, p 25.



surrender of the city to the Insurgents.<sup>16</sup> This is the first mention of Rebel activities so far north and would seem to indicate that Franco was by then able to spare some of his Italian pilots who had been ferrying troops or protecting operations along the Mediterranean. Madrid, at last, was taking no chances, for the Ministry of War ordered a nightly blackout after eleven o'clock, as well as a prohibition against any but essential street traffic after that hour. The stations of the municipal subway system would remain open as refuges for the city's population in the event of air raids. Private homes could still be lighted, but windows were to be covered to prevent the lights from showing in the streets, and all public gatherings as well as visiting in private homes and apartments was to cease after eleven in the evening.<sup>17</sup>

From the middle of August 1936 onward no city or sizable town in Spain was free from the threat of aerial bombardment so long as the war lasted. However, the main targets of the Rebels were the important cities of Madrid, Barcelona, Malaga, Valencia, and the Loyalist strongholds on the Bay of Biscay, San Sebastian, Santander, and Bilbao. The Government forces

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid. He writes that the commanding officer of the local garrison "threatened to shoot five prisoners for every person killed by bombardment from air or sea. Everybody laughed at this war of counter-threat except the prisoners," Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>L'Osservatore Romano, 9 Aug 1936, p 8.

never entered into the practice of bombing civilian centers with the savagery and frequency employed by the Insurgents, but in the early period of the war they did attack such population points as Saragossa, Sevilla, Salamanca, Algeciras, Cadiz, Valladolid, Palma on the island of Mallorca, and lesser towns in Franco-controlled territory. As the war progressed and more areas were lost to the Loyalists, aerial bombardment became more concentrated and practically one-sided. Loyalist planes appeared with less frequency over the Insurgent towns and rarely loosed bombs on civilian settlements. The German and Italian fliers operating in behalf of Franco, however, intensified their efforts and the world came to take for granted that any report of an air raid upon a Spanish city had to do with a Rebel attack by Nazi or Fascist pilots upon one of the few cities which remained in the hands of the Loyalist forces — Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao, or some other town which found itself the target of Franco's bombers on one day and part of a headline the next.

When the first aerial bomb fell on Madrid is difficult to say. On the third day of the revolt, General Franco had threatened that unless the Madrid government capitulated to the Insurgents he would bomb the headquarters of the Republican politicians in the capital.<sup>18</sup> His threat brought no surrender,

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<sup>18</sup>L'Osservatore Romano, 20-21 July 1936, p 6.

and, apparently, no immediate action by Franco to carry out his promise. A correspondent of the Petit Parisien was told by Franco, on 16 August, "'I shall never bomb Madrid — there are innocent people living there whom I have no wish to expose to danger.'"<sup>19</sup> On 23 August the Rebels asserted that their planes had bombed two airports at Madrid, but the Loyalist government denied that there had been an attack.<sup>20</sup> However, the next day's dispatches mentioned a Loyalist air attack upon a Granada airdrome as a "reprisal for the attack upon Madrid."<sup>21</sup> The first clearly admitted air attack upon Madrid came at the close of August. On the 27th, 28th, and 29th bombs were dropped on the city, but, except in the last of these raids when seventeen persons were wounded, little damage resulted.<sup>22</sup> According to one account the "air bombing . . . was carefully worked out with a view to frightening the Cabinet into surrender if possible without inflaming the people of Madrid against the Whites any more than could be

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<sup>19</sup>Koestler, op. cit., p 165.

<sup>20</sup>New York Times, 24 Aug 1936, p 1.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 25 Aug 1936, p 2.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 28 Aug 1936, p 3; 29 Aug 1936, p 2; 30 Aug 1936, p 1. See also, Atholl, op. cit., p 117, and Literary Digest, CXXII:14-15, 5 Sep 1936. A. Koestler, Menschenopfer Unerhört, 1937, states that the first Franco bombs fell on Madrid at 2330 on 29 Aug 1936. He does not mention the attacks of the 27th and 28th. See also Koestler's Testament, p 165, which says there were three persons wounded in the raid on the 29th.

helped."<sup>23</sup> But the capital's immunity which had been promised by Franco on 16 August was ended.<sup>24</sup> One of the bombs "blew late workers [at the Ministry of War] from their chairs, strewn them with broken windowglass and garden-dirt. . . . Then zooming up from the first power-dive bombing Europe has ever savored . . . the Rebel pilot, almost surely not a Spaniard, soared north. . . ."<sup>25</sup>

Before the middle of September the island of Íbiza, largest of the southern Balearic group and about 100 miles southeast of Valencia, was under attack by Rebel planes, obviously of Italian origin. On Sunday the 13th, bombs were dropped from four raiders on a waterfront crowd at Íbiza, killing 24 women and young children, as well as 13 older males. Inflamed by this attack, local Republican sympathizers machine-gunned

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<sup>23</sup>Time, XXVIII:16, 7 Sep 1936. The report continues: "At first White planes dropped only leaflets, next bombs directed solely at Madrid's military airport outside the city, finally showed expert marksmanship by putting a few bombs straight down into the Wall Street of Madrid, the famous Calle de Alcalá, which runs between modern steel buildings of skyscraper construction. These few bombs wounded not hundreds but exactly 17 persons and killed nobody."

<sup>24</sup>Atholl, op. cit., p 117. H. E. Knoblauch, Correspondent in Spain, 1937, asserts that Franco notified the Loyalists that he would respect a zone "which he outlined, roughly a mile square, and asked that all women and children be sent to that part of the capital." The government's reply, according to Knoblauch, refused to recognize such a zone "but almost immediately it transferred most of its barracks and munitions to points within it." Franco did not attack this zone until later, he says. Pp 100-101.

<sup>25</sup>Literary Digest, CXXII:14, 5 Sep 1936. See also Koestler, Menschenopfer, p 181.

or bayoneted all of the Franco supporters who had been made prisoners since the outbreak of the revolt in July.<sup>26</sup> This reaction is cited because it repeats the experience reported from Malaga earlier in the conflict,<sup>27</sup> and illustrates a tendency which later became widespread in Loyalist Spain. As one writer puts it, "Spanish governments, from the Napoleonic wars onwards, have often found it impossible to protect prisoners from the violence of a mob. Their tradition is to use persuasion and only gradually to impose control."<sup>28</sup>

The most ferocious acts of mob violence following Rebel air raids took place in Bilbao towards the end of September. Four bombing raids by German planes — morning, afternoon, and night of 25 September and the morning of the 26th — upon the important northern Spanish industrial and shipping city were described by a British journalist as a "sheer, unmixd assault upon the civilian population, who ran in

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<sup>26</sup>E. Paul, Life and Death of a Spanish Town, 1937, pp 415-416. Paul had heard the bombing from his villa at Santa Eulalia, about ten miles away, and on the 14th started to walk to Ibiza to investigate the situation. His vivid description of what he saw is given on pp 417-419 of his book. On the 15th several Rebel planes flew over Santa Eulalia, but dropped no bombs. Most of the inhabitants of the town, says Paul, had fled in terror to the woods.

<sup>27</sup>See p 151 above.

<sup>28</sup>Atholl, op. cit., p 85, quoting a Capt Gerald Brenan, a former British army officer and longtime resident of Spain.

terror through the streets. . . ."29 Many of the refugees who had fled to Bilbao from the coastal points further east, Irun, San Sebastian, and small villages, became so enraged by these bombings that they followed the leadership of members of the left-wing CNT (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores) labor organization and rushed to the docks. There "they massacred sixty-eight of the prisoners in the prison ships . . . and thought they had been merciful, for their own dead lay in hundreds."30 Another account mentions that the work of slaughtering the prisoners was carried out by "Anarchist Militiawomen" who, "Flying at these unarmed prisoners with knives, bayonets, and guns . . . killed a total of 220 of whom 30 were priests, mutilating and gashing until finally stopped by the intervention of Spanish Civil Guards."31

Whether the number of Franco sympathizers killed by the

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29Steer, Tree, p 77. Steer prefaces this estimate with the observation that "The Basques had no fighting planes, no anti-aircraft guns; nothing but a panicky refugee population from San Sebastian, hardly knowing where it lived, how it was to get food, and, at this terrible moment, where it was to hide. For there were no bombproof shelters." Ibid., p 76. For an interesting account of the one plane owned by the Basque Government see J. A. de Aguirre, Escape via Berlin, 1944, pp 71-72, 77-79. The plane was a specially equipped Curtiss pursuit type which had been the property of Haile Selassie, and was named "The Negus," in tribute to the Ethiopian Emperor.

30Steer, Tree, p 77.

31Time, XXVIII:20-21, 5 Oct 1936. The New York Times, 26 Sep 1936, p 10, gives the figure of hostages executed as 60.

mob numbered 60 or 68 or 220 does not alter the significance of the incident. And because Bilbao was a far more important city than Ibiza, the world heard of the horrors and ignored the preludes at Malaga and at the small Balearic Island port. At the time there appeared to be more indignation directed against the angry Basques than at the German aviators who dropped the bombs on Bilbao. While it is a truism that two wrongs do not make a right, a world which condemned the actions of the mob might well have vented some of its denunciation upon the dictators whose planes launched the bombs which provoked the excesses. On the ledger of excesses there also appears an entry for 24 August when it was alleged that 64 priests were executed in Toledo as a reprisal for the "first air bombing of Toledo."<sup>32</sup> There is no doubt that many clerics were put to death in Toledo and elsewhere, but the exact connection between the executions and the air bombings of Toledo is not mentioned in as clear terms by other sources.

Bilbao and Madrid, thereafter, became the principal targets of the Rebel air forces. Throughout the autumn of 1936 Madrid was visited at frequent intervals by raiders based in Franco-held territory. On 23 October the "first attack by a German Junker squadron" occurred.<sup>33</sup> The next

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<sup>32</sup>W. Miller, "The Little World War in Spain," in We Cover the World, p 431.

<sup>33</sup>Koestler, Testament, p 166. He says, "Little real damage was done and only a small number of civilians were wounded." Ibid.



day the planes returned. Apparently few bombs were dropped and the "White aviators contented themselves with cutting didos in the air, ripping off belts of machine gun bullets at the sidewalks of Madrid. When the planes had gone and the racket ceased the streets were dotted white with leaflets calling on Madrid to surrender before the real hell of heavy bombing was loosed upon it."<sup>34</sup>

On the 30th of October the Madrileños received a foretaste of what this particular hell would be. In a raid which destroyed the Getafe hospital, approximately 150 persons were killed. "This barbarity, however, only increased the people's determination to resist the entry into their city of men whose feeling of hatred and desire to kill could be carried to such lengths," a prominent Loyalist author wrote following the raid.<sup>35</sup> The planes came over shortly before dusk. According

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<sup>34</sup>Time, XXVIII:19, 2 Nov 1936. Koestler, Testament, p 166, writes that 12 bombs fell, two women were killed, and 5 persons injured severely. In an account of an earlier leaflet raid, Knoblaugh says that "Militiamen with rifles stood at the street intersections. Anyone making the slightest motion toward one of the leaflets was shot on the spot. At the end of the paper 'bombardments' the militia would sweep up the leaflets and burn them." Op. cit., p 101.

<sup>35</sup>J. A. Del Vayo, Freedom's Battle, 1940, p 35. ". . . Franco's 'Silver Falcons of Death' . . . swooped silently over Madrid and for the first time since Spain's civil war began the capital, with its refugee swollen population of 1,500,000, cowered and shuddered beneath the impact of live bombs. So sudden was this first attack that there was no time to sound air-raid warnings, and before thousands of pedestrians and motorists on the streets could be herded indoors, the skies were raining shrapnel. Over 125 were

to Koestler's account they were six 3-engine Junkers which had approached Madrid "silently and almost noiselessly . . . at a very great height." The planes dropped their bombs at a number of points in the center of the city as well as in the Getafe suburb. Many of the casualties were children who had been playing in the streets after their release from school.<sup>36</sup>

Perhaps apropos of this bombing, Franco was credited with saying over the radio, "One bomb dropped on a hospital sometimes means more than a victory."<sup>37</sup> Knoblaugh, while not denying that this, or some similar statement, was broadcast by the Insurgent chief, claims that its circulation by the Loyalists was a propaganda stunt designed to divert attention from their own excesses.<sup>38</sup> Franco's implication

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killed, including 70 children playing in the grounds of a schoolhouse." Time, XXVIII:17, 9 Nov 1936. As in all reports of air raids during the war the figures for casualties differ. No official listing was available against which to check news dispatches and other published casualty figures. Even the detailed, raid-by-raid compilation in the publication of the Comité Mondial contre la Guerre et le Fascisme, Bombardements et agressions en Espagne, 1938, often uses the designations "Nombreuses victimes," or "Plusieurs victimes," or simply "Victimes." For this particular raid it lists "125 tués, plus de 300 blessés." P 9. Koestler, Testament, p 172, gives 200 killed, 300 injured.

<sup>36</sup>Koestler, Testament, pp 166-168. For interesting impressions of the raids upon Madrid in the autumn of 1936, with no indication of the specific dates or casualties, see R. Sender, Counter-Attack in Spain, 1937, pp 204-212, and 260-264.

<sup>37</sup>A. L. Strong, Spain in Arms - 1937, 1937, p 34.

<sup>38</sup>Knoblaugh, op. cit., p 173.

was that in bringing home the horrors of air warfare to the civilian population of Madrid, and other Loyalist cities, surrender would be hastened and the lives both of his own soldiers and of civilians, spared further bombardments, would be saved. For a while, the supposedly imminent fall of Madrid to the Franco besiegers lent strength to the possibility that he might have been right, if somewhat brutal, in his guess.

Further attacks took place in the first weeks of November. According to Koestler's reckoning, raids occurred on thirteen of the first nineteen days of the month, causing some 800 deaths and 2,800 injuries to civilians.<sup>39</sup> One early morning raid on 14 November by three trimotor Rebel planes killed 52 in a Madrid working-class district — mostly women and children on their way to market and workers massed for a meeting.<sup>40</sup> According to the records of the World Committee against War and Fascism, Madrid was raided from the air on 18 of the 30 days in November, as well as being subjected to artillery bombardment on 24 days. Only on the first, seventeenth, and twenty-fifth of that month was the city free from either or

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<sup>39</sup>Koestler, Testament, pp 168-173, has a tabulation of these raids and the resultant casualties. See also his Menschenopfer, pp 184-191, for substantially the same information. Atholl, op. cit., lists approximately the same totals. P 117.

<sup>40</sup>Time, XXVIII:23, 23 Nov 1936, and G. Cox, Defence of Madrid, 1937, pp 113-114. See also Literary Digest, CXXII: 13-14, 21 Nov 1936.

both forms of assault.<sup>41</sup> "To the terror of daylight air raids was added the unspeakable horror of night attacks," reads one report. "Women and children fell in streets and parks, or under crumbling buildings. . . . corpses mounted in the morgue faster than coffins could be made to receive them, and the bodies had to be buried anyhow." Fires broke out in the darkened slums and "the shrieks of its inhabitants carried a mile away."<sup>42</sup> Geoffrey Cox, an English correspondent, sets the first night raid on 19-20 November. He describes the scenes on the morning following, saying that there "was no panic over this attack, rather a dazed incomprehension, as if the people could not realise how such horror could come in one night, mingled with an almost childish curiosity."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Op. cit., p 10. This statistical summary lists 80 killed and 400 wounded in an air raid on 9 November, 200 killed and many wounded by air raids and artillery shelling on the 18th, and 161 killed, 204 wounded by bombs and shells on the 19th. Only in the attacks on the 6th and 7th are no victims listed, merely "Dégâts", or damages to buildings and property. P 10. The Anglicized title will be used in citing this work.

<sup>42</sup>Literary Digest, CXXII:11, 28 Nov 1936. Describing a raid of 14 November, a British publication said, in part, "Streets were torn up, water mains burst, and general confusion reigned. Much adverse criticism has been leveled at General Franco for this and other air raids, but in fairness to the insurgents, it must be realized that he had offered to create a neutral zone for non-combatants, and cannot be held responsible if the Government chose to turn Madrid into a defended locality." "The International Situation: The Spanish Civil War," Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, LXXXII: 186, Feb 1937.

<sup>43</sup>Cox, op. cit., pp 122-127. He continues; "The Madrileños appeared automatically to adopt towards these air raids the attitude of the front-line soldier in the Great War. If a bomb had your number on it, there was nothing you could do. If not, why worry?" Ibid., p 127.

The International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation's fourteen storey building, one of the most conspicuous of Madrid's 20th Century landmarks, was a frequent target for Franco's gunners on the outskirts of the city. Now the Rebel planes attacked it with thermite bombs, doing only superficial damage. All through the siege of Madrid during the autumn and early winter of 1936-1937 work went on in this skyscraper and its tower was used by Loyalist forces for spotting artillery emplacements as well as for warning of approaching aircraft. Because of its indestructability and its excellent vantage points, foreign correspondents used the building as a refuge and a headquarters. As a sidelight it is interesting to note that:

Scores of panic-stricken Madrid mothers decided that, even though Colonel Behn's building seemed to be a target for White bombs, it also seemed to be able to take this strafing better than any other Madrid building, and in they swarmed with their children. The Spanish moppets surprised correspondents by not blubbering or bawling, accepted biscuits and milk from Colonel Behn after their mothers had fearfully asked "how much will that cost?" and been reassured that the biscuits and milk were on the I. T. & T.<sup>44</sup>

For all the ferocity of the almost daily attacks on Madrid through November and December 1936, the air bombardments never reached the intensity of later assaults on Barcelona in

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<sup>44</sup>Time, XXVIII;20, 30 Nov 1936. See also Cox, op. cit., pp 122-125, Col Sosthenes Behn at the time was president of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, an American-owned enterprise which had a concession to operate the Spanish communications,

1938. The civilian losses in Madrid were staggering enough. Still the Spanish capital held out, and air raids did not seem to lessen the population's determination to resist the Franco forces which were fighting almost within the city itself.<sup>45</sup>

On 25 November 1936 a commission of six members of the British Parliament arrived in the capital to make an unofficial inspection of the effects of the war and the bombings upon the city. They toured the area in and around Madrid and "were profoundly impressed by the calm attitude and the dignity of the people" of the besieged town.<sup>46</sup> Cox complains that one of the members of delegation, Wing-Commander James, minimized the importance of the bombings when he returned to London and told Parliament that the correspondents in Madrid had "entirely and absolutely misled him." Cox quotes James as saying: "They have never seen any bombardments. And, what is more surprising, they are not seeing them now."<sup>47</sup> Cox and the other correspondents, whatever their limitations, were certainly

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<sup>45</sup>Cox, op. cit., pp 125-132; Matthews, op. cit., pp 196-206; and Sender, op. cit., p 278, are among the writers who present testimony to the resistance of the citizens of Madrid to the Franco bombings.

<sup>46</sup>"L'Enquete en Espagne de six membres de la Chambre des Communes," Revue de l'Armée de l'Air, IX:218, Feb 1937. Four Laborites, Seymour Cocks, Capt Crawford Green, Dai Grenfeld, and Wilfred Roberts, with two Conservatives, Maj Archie James, and Capt J. R. J. Macnamara, comprised the delegation. See K. S. Watson, Single to Spain, 1937, for sidelights on this visit.

<sup>47</sup>Cox, op. cit., p 125.

experiencing air bombing and shelling practically every day.

However, as a writer for a Swiss military publication put it:

If there is an example typical of the failure of this creation of the imagination, [the Douhet theory] it is certainly the action of the Nationalist aviation against Madrid. . . . Everyone knows the result of this method Douhetienne: nothing; nothing, at least of what was expected by the directors at Burgos. They needed to deal with a nation of cowards, without resource, without pride, and without courage, in order that the ravages and destructions effected in the rear, painful and discouraging as they might be, could succeed in a decisive manner to break the morale of the inhabitants.

Massive bombing operations, well conducted and well supplied, could evidently do a great deal of damage; but to win the war that way alone, there is an abyss, an abyss which is far from being jumped.<sup>48</sup>

Herbert L. Matthews, one of the better-known American foreign correspondents, who had arrived in Madrid on 2 December 1936, testified to the fact that aerial bombardments had not at that time shaken the resolve of the people of the capital to face up to the difficulties of the siege by the Rebel troops. He attributed this determination to a spiritual as well as physical vitality within the Madrileños which he saw exhibited in many small incidents during that first winter of the war.<sup>49</sup> Another correspondent, William P. Carney, also

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<sup>48</sup>"D'Autres leçons de la guerre d'Espagne," Revue Militaire Suisse, Mar 1937, Digested in The Command and Staff School Quarterly Review of Military Literature, XVII:314-315, Dec 1937.

<sup>49</sup>Matthews, op. cit., pp 185-195, gives a number of sidelights on the reactions of the people as he saw them in December of 1936.



of the New York Times, reported that Madrid was practically defenseless against the 400 and 500 pound bombs dropped by the Insurgent planes.<sup>50</sup> Yet, Madrid lacked neither morale nor resistance on the part of its civilian population. "Men, urged on by mothers and wives, flocked in hundreds to enroll. . . . Even boys of fourteen were with difficulty kept out of the trenches."<sup>51</sup> Franco's attacks "instead of causing panic, hardened the population, bringing steadily increasing recruits to the people's battle-front."<sup>52</sup>

During the autumn of 1936 lesser towns had undergone severe bombings from the air. Oviedo, a provincial capital just south of the Asturian seaport of Gijón on the Bay of Biscay, received the brunt of repeated air raids through September and October. Webb Miller went through some of the battle for this city when he succeeded in passing over the Loyalist lines. He testified to the damage and the casualties — 600 civilians killed by bombing, rifle, and artillery fire — but did not himself witness any air raids, except a mild one in which four bombs harmed no one. He reported that on 24 September a total of 1,910 bombs were dropped and on 6 October approximately sixty civilians were killed by two

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<sup>50</sup>Time, XXVIII:23, 14 Dec 1936.

<sup>51</sup>Atholl, op. cit., p 118.

<sup>52</sup>Strong, op. cit., p 39.

bombs.<sup>53</sup> As Herbert Matthews says, "The little towns around [Madrid] were getting plenty of punishment." He tells of the raids on the provincial capital of Guadalajara, 35 miles northeast of Madrid, in early December when several historic monuments were damaged, but does not indicate whether there were civilian casualties.<sup>54</sup>

That same winter Bilbao was subjected to a series of air attacks aimed principally at the waterfront areas and docks, but not avoiding the districts where the refugees huddled or the working people lived. Describing the raid of 4 January 1937, G. L. Steer said:

The sirens changed to a most melancholy song of two notes, one high and the other low, signifying peril. The women of Bilbao had already seized up their children and gone below with streaming hair into the refuges; the men followed them hotfoot. Bilbao became a city where only police lived, and Red Cross men stood ready at their cars; in a few minutes all noise of circulation had gone, except the flutter of old paper along the streets.

. . . . .

With appalling deliberation, with the slowhandedness of experts in political torture, the foreign fleet passed over the cringing city of Bilbao.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Miller, loc. cit., pp 434-440. In Oct 1934 Oviedo had been the scene of a revolt against the Madrid government by Asturian miners and industrial workers. It had been put down after bloody excesses on both sides and after the employment by the Madrid government of Moroccan troops from the Spanish Foreign Legion. See Koestler, Testament, pp 54-59.

<sup>54</sup>Matthews, op. cit., p 200. These raids were by Insurgent planes,

<sup>55</sup>Steer, Tree, pp 110-111.

This bombing had consequences similar to those of the one which occurred in late September of 1936. Enraged Basques stormed the prisons and several churches, killing 61 at the Larringa Prison, 33 at the Casa de Galera, 96 at the Convent of Los Angeles Custodios, and 4 at a Carmelite church.<sup>56</sup>

"The feeling of hatred for the German aviators was spontaneous among all the Basques," according to Steer. "It was not only the town mob, the proletariat of Bilbao, that wished to take violent measures against them."<sup>57</sup>

In a long analysis of the temper of the Basque civilians and militiamen under these bombing attacks, Steer gives what is perhaps one of the most penetrating resums of the effect of aerial bombardment upon the population of a modern city. For this reason, Steer's text is quoted in full at this point.

The irregular nature of the militia, and the fact that Bilbao was being continually raided, set the price very much higher. To a civilian population naturally uneducated to the aeroplane — for Spain is a backward country — and biased in the direction of ignorance and alarmism by the influx of what was largely a lower class refugee mass from Guipuzcoa, the daily arrival of the planes over Bilbao and the incessant bombardment of fourteen kilometres of riverside and port meant that they were suffering the same cruel fate as their fighting menfolk. The riverside and the port, and Las Arenas were precisely the parts of Bilbao where the poorer classes lived and the refugees were quartered. Scattered among them there was shipping; there were war factories; there was one aerodrome and one important bridge. It

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp 114-121, describes the scenes of the killings in detail.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp 113-114.

was the fault neither of the poor of Bilbao nor of its government that they lived near such targets of aerial war: if of anybody, it was the fault of a capitalist system which encouraged the workers to live near the great factories of Basque heavy industry in time of peace. And so they suffered.

I neither desire nor intend to make any claim that the German aircraft which made its daily mess of industrial Bilbao were out to kill civilians. They wanted to hit factories; and more often than not, they missed. They did, however, break the Air Warfare Rules drawn up at The Hague in 1923, which expressly forbid the bombardment of military establishments or depôts, or factories constituting important and well-known centres engaged in the manufacture of arms, ammunition or distinctively military supplies, where such localities cannot be bombarded "without the indiscriminate bombardment of the civil population."

Now, on an average during these bombardments of the Nervion, nine Basques were killed per raiding day; and it was calculated by the Direction of Mobilised Industries in Bilbao that the material damage done to the machinery or stocks under their control was considerably less than the value of civilian lives lost, if one assesses a Basque life insurance policy at £ 500 a piece. And the bombers knew this: they went for the same factories again and again. An instance was the Lunatic Asylum where trench mortars were made at Derio: I personally saw it bombed three times without injury to machinery, but one peasant and one worker were killed in a field, and several villagers given the quietus in Derio itself.

This bombing was therefore indiscriminate bombing: the repetition of attacks on the same target in many other places than Derio proved that the bombers knew their chances of accuracy were low. At Portugalete and in Las Arenas, indeed, I am generous when I acquit them of deliberate attacks on the civilian population: the military objectives that existed there were so petty, and so far from the bomb-holes, that inaccuracy seemed too weak a donkey to carry the blame along. But there it is. Let them go.

What they knew when they bombed the Nervion was that if the factory was missed, the civilian population would get it in the neck. And that was why the bombing was worth while. Not only was a trifling damage done to Bilbao's war industry; not only was the working capacity of the men in mobilised industries reduced (though to a far less degree than in the case of London

workmen during the Great War, and only appreciably in the last fortnight of the fight for Bilbao): but there was always a last, dependable reserve in the overbearing argument of their bombs, that the lesson of air dominance would be written red in the blood of the terrified poor, and that their memories would be stamped with a heavy imprint, whose lines were the torture and whose paper the pallid faces of their brothers, or sisters, or children in death.

Theorists too easily assume that bombardments killing civilians break down their resistance in the end, and make them sue for peace. This was not true of Bilbao: the raiders were hated, and even when the town was occupied by the conquering army, whom the raiders screened, the masses of Bilbao did not receive them with pleasure. A bitterness, an opposition lasted: the first night of the victory was celebrated with doors shut, lights out, and silence in the streets. The Basques had been handled too brutally to wish to mask their feelings.

The raids, however, did terrify; they dazed the people; they were a sharp and acid solvent of normal life. One never knew at what moment of the day — but not of the night — they would come. The Germans seemed averse, during the great offensive, to night-raids: perhaps the mountain barrier south of Bilbao embarrassed them. There were only two occasions when they flew at night, on one of which they dropped bombs in an untenanted pinewood south of the cinturón, while the other was dedicated to the machine-gunning of the civilian refugees on the road to Santander. But in the day the sirena would shriek, whether one was eating or washing or cleaning the house. Then one would have to gather together the small corps of children with which every Spanish family is blessed, and bolt into the refugio and perhaps hang about for an hour doing nothing but see how much Bilbao needed aeroplanes; and calculate when they were coming. Then there were the dead and the damage to see, and the excitement of the Red Cross cars and police dashing round on the bombers' trail, and the sudden re-opening of the roads to a lunatic traffic. And there were special spicy days, as when the driver of the up-train from Las Arenas did not hear the warning, ran slap into a tunnel, where people were hiding, and cut six of them in half, which drove him mad. And the children became little nuisances to their mothers, for they had nothing to do: the schools closed their doors before the impossibility of conducting classes which might suffer fatal interruption at any hour.

The sirena, the grind of engines in the air, the dash for shelter, the explosions, and the sirena again

became an abnormal, over-rapid rhythm of life for the ill-employed Bilbaino family. They invented funny words for the new elements in their existence: the planes, because of their noise, were called tranviás (tramways), and the biggest plane of all — the Junker 52 — was called pajarito, which is the diminutive of bird. There were jokes about the sirena and the helter-skelter in plenty. But it was a bitter sardonic humour, showing how deep the terror had sunk in.

And so the alarm of the militia was condoned.

Did not civilians read in the papers every day of the terrible bombardments upon the front line, when (both in legend and in fact) far more bombs were dropped in an attack than the Nervion saw in a week; and was it not added that the gudarís [Basque militia] had resisted bravely, but had at last been forced to fall back on second-line positions? It was perfectly comprehensible. When they saw the damage done at the river-side — and every bomb-hole represented to them a deliberate aim — the gudarís must have seemed heroes to resist at all. They never thought to ask whether the bombs at the front had hit anything, when at Bilbao they always hit something.

A spirit of sympathy was built up for the militia, where a spirit of resistance ought to have been consciously created. And the deep-rooted reasons for it were two — and they were twins born on the same democratic day. Because he was an out-and-out democrat, the Basque was essentially sympathetic and humane: he was sorry for the sufferings of individuals, and could not think of cauterising the wounds of the mass. As a democrat, too, he detested propaganda and the control of thought. Censorship, yes; but a department to control the civilian population, no. The idea of the suppression of certain unpleasant military details he understood, but that a new-fangled hortatory organisation should lay down the lines of each day's Press was intolerable and degrading.

. . . . .

Under their eyes, the mystique of the air was drugging their troops and rearguard; and the rearguard re-injected the troops with the opium in double portion. It was solely their natural peasant virtues; the undertow of resistance fathoms deep in them, formed by their timeless tradition as free men, that enabled the Basques to fight so long and, towards the end, with increasing bravery. Defeatism was always to be detected below their surface: it could have been cleared out of them, but no

one ever tried to organise that simple service. They stand, therefore, as a warning to democracy — that some freedoms should not be tolerated in war.<sup>58</sup>

In April the raids on Bilbao were more severe than those of January, but the behavior of the population was better. The city was in desperate straits. But "there were stocks of food in April, while in January there were none."<sup>59</sup> A particularly heavy raid on 18 April killed 67 and wounded 110, with bombs penetrating to underground shelters where the people had sought refuge.<sup>60</sup>

Meanwhile, other Loyalist cities were feeling the force of repeated attacks by Rebel aircraft. Every day, with few exceptions, Insurgent planes and artillery bombarded Madrid, although the full force of the Franco thrust at the capital had been turned aside in November. By the end of March 1937, the city had had 980 buildings completely or partially destroyed by aerial attack, 1,490 persons killed, and 3,488

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp 177-182. Italics are in the original text.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p 129. Steer comments further, "Contrary to the textbooks, the people's will to resist does not weaken: it increases. But the poorer part of the population, starved and unnerved, is liable to outbursts of fury which may bring them into opposition with their Government. . . . What pulled the Basques through a crisis which would have broken another community was their natural sense of discipline and order." Pp 129-130.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp 186-187. As an indication of the unreliability of figures relating to casualties, the report of the World Committee against War and Fascism, op. cit., p 16, notes this particular raid but indicates only "Nombreux blessés" under the heading of "Victimes,"

wounded, according to reasonably trust-worthy figures.<sup>61</sup>

Writing at this time for a British military journal, Captain Macnamara who had visited Madrid in the previous November with the Parliamentary delegation, remarked that, in spite of the day-to-day bombardments, the civilian "population, including the children, were remarkably calm." The attackers, he said, "were loathed, but not feared. The . . . population was, in a way, proud that they as much as the soldiers were earning glory in this conflict."<sup>62</sup> Various factors contributed to the failure of the Franco armies to capture Madrid in the furious assaults of late 1936 and early 1937, but the steadfast resistance of the populace under the continual and unnerving battering it received by shells and bombs is testified to by observers of all political shades of sympathy and opposition. Anyone whose memory of those days is not clouded to obscurity can recall how the failure of the Madrid populace to succumb to the terroristic methods of the bombardment gained the respect of much of the world, even where opinions differed as to the merits of the

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<sup>61</sup>Time, XXIX:21, 29 Mar 1937.

<sup>62</sup>J. R. J. Macnamara, "My Impressions of the Spanish Civil War - I," United Services Review, LXXVII:5-6, 11 Mar 1937. Although the article was based largely upon his impressions gained during the November visit to Madrid, Capt Macnamara was writing from current accounts as well. He added, significantly, that the behavior of the Spanish civilians should be "of comfort . . . to those in our own country who fear that as a nation we may lose our morale because of the first big air raid on London in the next war." Loc. cit., p 6.



respective causes. The defense of Madrid was as good for propaganda in favor of the Loyalist position as the defense of the Toledo Alcazar had been for Franco's side earlier in the war.

Malaga, on the Mediterranean coast, was also a target of the Insurgent bombers in the early months of 1937. Arthur Koestler, the Hungarian author, arrived in Malaga the day following the destructive raids of 27 January 1937 and noted in his diary that "Madrid after the great air attack and artillery bombardment was a health resort compared with this town in its death throes."<sup>63</sup> And, when the bombers came again on the 29th he recorded that:

Everyone runs hither and thither in feckless confusion; the panic is much worse than it was in Madrid. . . . the population is obviously demoralized.<sup>64</sup>

Under the entry for 7 February, he gives an eye-witness account of what he calls the "breakfast air raid" of that day. "Since yesterday," he wrote, "the physiognomy of the town has changed; no more trams, all shops closed, groups at every corner and every face shrouded in the grey cobweb of fear. . . . I feel the contagion of fear getting me too."<sup>65</sup> The following day the city fell to the advancing Insurgent columns.<sup>66</sup> Through

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<sup>63</sup>A. Koestler, Dialogue with Death, 1946, p 13.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p 14.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., pp 28-29.

<sup>66</sup>Peers, op. cit., p 275.

all the attack on Malaga, Rebel planes strafed the refugees who fled along the coastal roads to escape capture, and, in their minds, almost certain death if they fell into the hands of the Franco troops, most of whom were Italians sent to Spain by Mussolini to aid his brother Fascist.<sup>67</sup>

Brihuega, a small town some 50 miles northeast of Madrid, was visited in late March 1937 by "one of the most ferocious bombing raids and air combats of the war." Since both Rebel and Government planes were fighting above the town, which side dropped the bombs is not clear, but the center of the town was described by Matthews as "'a shambles.'" His report continues:

At least ten bombs had been dropped within a few square blocks right in the centre of the town. Streets were filled with gaping holes, rocks, wooden beams and bricks. A dozen houses were nothing but shapeless masses of stone and wood in which soldiers were feverishly digging for bodies.

. . . . .  
Women ran streaming through the streets in terror that could not be allayed, despite the return of safety.

A frantic group of mothers and children persuaded the journalists to take them in their car to a place of perhaps greater safety. At first the children whimpered and cried as the car jounced along, then a 7-year-old Spaniard was asked . . . "What do you think of all this?"

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<sup>67</sup>I. de Palencia, Smouldering Freedom, 1945, says the refugees were strafed from the air by German bombers and shelled from the sea by Italian warships. P 37. F. M. Wilson, In the Margins of Chaos, 1945, has some account of this flight from Malaga. Pp 187-188.

"Very good!" replied the child, sitting up and smiling happily. "The bombs destroyed our school."

Such was Matthews' "own state of mind that he described this answer as 'the only rational remark of the whole astonishing day.'" <sup>68</sup>

At the end of March and the beginning of April the country around Bilbao received increased attention from the Insurgent planes. The fall of Bilbao was approaching and the intensified efforts of the Franco forces to encircle and capture the city led to repeated attacks upon all the area surrounding it. Durango, a fair sized town on the main road between San Sebastian and Bilbao, 54 miles east of the latter city, underwent bombings on 31 March, 1, 2, and 4 April, all of them severe. On the first raid four heavy bombers and nine chasers (German) appeared in the early morning and dropped 500-pound projectiles. In the estimation of G. L. Steer, "The objective of this bombardment . . . was to terrify civilians, and to knock so many houses across the roads that they would be impassable to motor transport. . . . The Germans wanted to strike terror into everyone who lived in Durango, everyone who passed through it, and everyone who heard of it." <sup>69</sup> A number of nuns were killed by a bomb which fell through the

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<sup>68</sup>Time, XXIX:21, 29 Mar 1937. See also Matthews, op. cit., p 276.

<sup>69</sup>Steer, Tree, pp 161-162.

roof of the Santa Susana chapel,<sup>70</sup> and further casualties and damage occurred in other church structures. The total dead in Durango in the 31 March raid came to 127, at least.<sup>71</sup> An Insurgent communiqué from Salamanca said that Socialists, Anarchists, and Communists in Durango had prevented Catholics from leaving the churches to seek shelter, and that the "terrorists" among the Loyalist groups had burned the churches and shot the priests and nuns. The Insurgent General Queipo de Llano, sometimes referred to as the "bibulous Radio General," broadcast a similar story from Sevilla. Steer says of these accounts that "All of this was rather bad lying, as none of the churches showed any trace of fire, nor the corpses of priests and nuns signs of death by shooting."<sup>72</sup>

Again on 2 April, Durango was the target "at a special performance for the Dean of Canterbury and his party . . . when the fighting planes machine-gunned the civilian population as they took to the fields. . . ."<sup>73</sup> How the Durango churches came to be burned is not clear, as there was no evidence that

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p 165. Steer says fourteen nuns were killed, while J. B. S. Haldane, op. cit., pp 49-50, says the number was eleven.

<sup>71</sup>Steer, Tree, pp 166-168. He adds, "Not at once, but gradually, with appalling foreboding, unwillingly even, the people came to the churches to look for those they had lost. They were right to tremble. Very few were not dead." P 166.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p 168. See also Atholl, op. cit., p 152.

<sup>73</sup>Steer, Tree, p 168, and Atholl, op. cit., p 152.

the Germans were using incendiary bombs at this place.<sup>74</sup>

While the principal targets of the Insurgent bombers during the early part of April were the Basque towns around Bilbao, the island of Ibiza, which had become a Rebel base, was visited by Loyalist bombers on several occasions. Most of the houses in the port village were destroyed, but the civilian casualties must have been light for it was reported that the survivors of the Insurgent attacks of September 1936 had been warned by the Loyalists and disappeared from their homes before the raids.<sup>75</sup> Spasmodic Rebel raids caused a number of deaths and damage in such widely scattered towns as Ochandiano, Ceanuri, Jaen, Gerone (?), Guadalcano, Lamiaco, Amorebieta, Sestac, and Lejona during the first two weeks of April.<sup>76</sup> The first recorded use of incendiary bombs dropped from Insurgent planes took place later in the month, on the 25th, when the town of Eibar, just east of Durango, was savagely bombed.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Atholl, op. cit., p 152.

<sup>75</sup>Paul, op. cit., p 426. See also Time, XXIX:22, 7 June 1937.

<sup>76</sup>World Committee against War and Fascism, op. cit., p 16. Many of these villages are too small to appear on the standard maps, while others are located elsewhere in these chapters. The town listed as Gerone is Gerona, an important city of 21,000 on the main road between Perpignan and Barcelona in northeast Spain.

<sup>77</sup>Atholl, op. cit., p 153, and Steer, Tree, p 223.

All this springtime activity provided a preface to the most spectacular aerial bombardment of the first year of the war — the Insurgent attack on the Basque town of Guernica on the 26th of April. No previous air raid produced the repercussions, international and military, which followed this incident. And, with the possible exception of the 1938 March raids on Barcelona, no aerial attack of the whole Spanish Civil War received so much publicity. Likewise, the Guernica episode aroused such partisan sentiments and provoked such heated arguments that it is still, after the examples of Warsaw, Rotterdam, and other mass destructions of the Second World War, mentioned as an outstanding case whenever the ferocity of aerial bombardments is discussed. Even ten years after the event, "Guernica" is a word which automatically brings to mind the picture of the horrors of total war, and Winston Churchill, in his recent account of the years between the two World Wars, pauses to cite "the bombing of the defenceless little township of Guernica" as conclusive evidence that the Germans were preparing to conquer the world by dropping devastation from the air.<sup>78</sup>

The apparent facts are these.<sup>79</sup> Guernica, a small town

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<sup>78</sup>W. S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 1948, p 214. Foltz, op. cit., pp 54-55, writes: "Guernica was 'Coventried' as thoroughly as Coventry itself. . . . This was the birthday of the 'blitz,' April 26, 1937."

<sup>79</sup>For a good brief review of the Guernica affair see K. Duff, "The Course of the War in Spain, (ii) Military Operations, 1936-1937," Survey of International Affairs, 1937, 1938, II:68-72.

about 25 miles northeast of Bilbao and almost the same distance north of Durango, had relatively little military importance.<sup>80</sup> A minor munitions factory and barracks were the only possible military objectives, and the town seems to have been without anti-aircraft defenses.<sup>81</sup> However, the town was of political significance since it was the ancient capital of the Basques and still meant much to these people as a symbol of their semi-autonomous position in the Spanish Republic.<sup>82</sup> The population at the time of the attack was between 5,000 and 10,000, with probably as many as 3,000 refugees in the number. Because of the regular Monday cattle fair there may also have been many transients from the surrounding countryside in Guernica,

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<sup>80</sup>Gen Duval wrote that the bombardments of Durango and Guernica were militarily justifiable in that it is permissible for an attacker to take all possible precautions to neutralize the defense. Both towns, he said, were integral parts of the Loyalist defense scheme. Op. cit., pp 149-150.

<sup>81</sup>After the attack, American military authorities in Washington, while deploring the incident, were reported as saying that there might have been military justification for the raid in that the town of Bermeo, about ten miles away on the coast, was a proper objective and Guernica was on the highway between the Franco troops and Bermeo. J. Mitchell, "Death Rides the Wind," New Republic, LXXXI:63-64, 26 May 1937. See also, T. J. Hamilton, Appeasement's Child, 1943, p 33.

<sup>82</sup>Aguirre, op. cit., p 41, suggests that the Franco-Hitler coalition chose Guernica "as the first civilian town to be wiped from the face of the earth" for political reasons. As a "centuries-old cradle of democracy, [Guernica] was sacred to a race of people who, the totalitarians had been taught, must be eliminated."

but accounts are not clear on this score.<sup>83</sup>

Most reports and comments agree that an air raid alarm was sounded shortly after four o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th. A single plane, said by Steer to be a Heinkel 111, dropped six 50-pound bombs and a shower of grenades. Fifteen minutes later, according to his information, a number of Junker 52s (heavy bombers) came over.<sup>84</sup> These craft dumped loads of large bombs, most of which hit buildings in the town and some of which pierced shelters to which many of the inhabitants had fled. Steer, himself, was not in Guernica at the time of the attack, but reached there that evening and got his accounts of the actual bombings from inhabitants of the village. Much of what he has written about the bombing of Guernica, he uses the antique or Basque spelling Gernika, is corroborated by reports of other journalists who accompanied him to the town, so he is usually cited as the most articulate and one of the most reliable commentators upon what did happen.<sup>85</sup>

Following the heavy bombing which was concentrated upon

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<sup>83</sup>Aguirre, op. cit., p 49, implies that the Monday fair was held as usual on 26 Apr 1937, but some accounts cast doubt on the fact that peasants from the surrounding country came to town that day. There are stories that they were warned by the Basque officials to stay away from the town.

<sup>84</sup>Steer, Tree, pp 237-238.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid, pp 238 ff.; Atholl, op. cit., pp 153-163; and Davy, op. cit., pp 126-127.



the center of the town and missed the munitions works and the barracks, flights of from three to a dozen planes rained incendiaries upon the shaken buildings, most of which had wooden roofs. There is no denying that fires ravaged the town soon after the initial attack. But authorities sympathetic to the Insurgent cause disputed the assertion that these fires were set by incendiary bombs from the attacking planes. For example, the Burgos government sent an investigating committee to Guernica sometime after the bombing and this group reported that the fires resulted from explosions of dynamite stored in sewers by the Basques, or were started by the Basque defenders after the last attacking plane had departed from the neighborhood. One of the witnesses examined by this committee said that "the explosions did not cease with the departure of the aeroplanes, but that throughout the night they continued to be heard in great number. . . ." He attributed these explosions "to hand grenades and munitions which the Red militiamen had placed inside the buildings."<sup>86</sup> Similar views were expressed by other witnesses before the investigators. And opinions that the fires had been caused by the defenders of the town, either to destroy it before it fell into the hands of the Franco troops who were advancing on Bilbao or to make it appear as though the German planes had set the city afire,

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<sup>86</sup>[Spain: Civil Government of Burgos], Guernica, 1938, p 24.

were widely held by apologists for the Insurgent cause.<sup>87</sup>

General Franco, shortly after the attack, said "'Guernica was destroyed by the gasoline and hand bombs of criminal incendiaries serving Basque President Juan [sic] Aguirre. Nationalist aviation did not fly all that afternoon because of bad weather. The village was converted into ruins by the Red hordes.'"<sup>88</sup>

These views do not appear to square with the circumstances. Nationalist aviation did fly against Guernica on the afternoon of 26 April. In fact, Franco was quibbling if he attempted to disguise the German Nazi Condor Legion which made the attack, by saying that no "Nationalist" planes were in the air over Guernica. Perhaps there were no Spanish pilots or craft responsible for the bombing. But Hugo Sperrle's eager Nazi fliers had no such feeling of modesty and their participation was well advertised during and following the Spanish war.<sup>89</sup> Foltz tells of hearing young German airmen, at a cafe in Vittoria a few days after the Guernica bombing, "boasting of how they had leveled the town on Sperrle's orders."<sup>90</sup> While

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<sup>87</sup>Beumelburg, op. cit., p 98, says that the city had been completely destroyed by the "Reds" and then adds, "Die Bomben der Angreifer hatten ihr den Rest gegeben." Translated this means, "The bombs of the attackers had finished it off."

<sup>88</sup>L. Stowe, "Franco Lies to Win," New Republic, LXXXI: 40, 19 May 1937. Juan Aguirre was the brother of Basque President José Antonio de Aguirre.

<sup>89</sup>Hauptmann Hermann, The Luftwaffe, 1943, p 161.

<sup>90</sup>Foltz, op. cit., p 55.

the Germans did not publicly admit the presence in Spain of the Condor Legion until after the fall of Barcelona in the early months of 1939, there was no secret about the fact that General Sperrle, who was known in Spain as "Señor Sanders" to maintain the fiction of non-intervention, had more than 25,000 "selected Luftwaffe airmen, ground personnel, and Wehrmacht communications specialists" under his command in Spain during the war.<sup>91</sup>

From the accounts of a number of reliable correspondents, who not only saw the planes, from a distance it is true, but were machine-gunned by others on the road to Guernica, it is evident that there were hostile planes in the skies on what one of the writers, Noel Monks of the London Daily Express, called "the sunniest of all the days he spent on the Basque front."<sup>92</sup> And fragments of German bombs and unexploded German incendiary bombs were picked up in considerable quantity in the city the day after the bombing.

No one disputes the fact that Guernica was almost totally

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p 50. The Condor Legion appeared for the first time officially in Spain at the victorious entry into Barcelona on 21 Feb 1939. Militär-Wochenblatt, XLIII:2910, 21 Apr 1939. "The Nazis had the grace not to admit their intervention officially until the Spanish war was over in 1939, when they gaily published full details of the aircraft employed and the operations they were engaged on, accompanied by the usual liberal awards of medals." A. Lee, The German Air Force, 1946, p 14.

<sup>92</sup>Atholl, op. cit., pp 155-156.

destroyed by fire during the night of 26-27 April and the day which followed. The Burgos investigators estimated that 71% of the 300 houses in the town were completely demolished by fire and explosion, 7% "badly battered about," and 22% damaged in varying lesser degree.<sup>93</sup> An incomplete estimate of the dead and wounded gave 1,654 killed and 889 injured, a figure ascertained before the Insurgent forces entered the city.<sup>94</sup> Guernica had provided the longest casualty lists of the Spanish War for which aerial bombardment was directly or indirectly responsible.

Insurgent troops occupied the city on 29 April, meeting only nominal resistance from the few Basque defenders who remained. Guernica had been subdued, but the Franco government paid a great price for the town in the anger aroused by the bombings, not only in Loyalist Spain, but throughout the world. No single event of the war brought so much condemnation from individuals in the United States, Britain, France, and other countries who still adhered to the belief that indiscriminate bombing of civilians was akin to barbarity. When the news of the destruction of Guernica reached the outside world, protests and denunciations of the Franco government

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<sup>93</sup>Burgos Government report as cited, p 14.

<sup>94</sup>Atholl, op. cit., p 155, and the World Committee against War and Fascism, op. cit., p 17, give these same totals. Aguirre, op. cit., p 49, says, "more than two thousand died."

filled the press, radio, and public platforms.<sup>95</sup> General Franco's denial that Nationalist planes had bombed the town was met with scorn and disbelief.<sup>96</sup> William E. Borah rose in the United States Senate, on 6 May 1937, to castigate the Spanish Rebels for the attack on Guernica.<sup>97</sup> Seventy-six prominent Americans cabled a vigorous protest to Franco.<sup>98</sup> The German Embassy in Washington and the Nazi Consult Generalate in New York were picketed by numbers of individuals who called for the removal of German troops from Spain and the elimination of German planes and pilots from the

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<sup>95</sup>See Time, 10 May 1937, p 22, for a sampling of these protests.

<sup>96</sup>In answer to Pres Aguirre's appeal to world conscience, "General Franco pronounced at once: 'Aguirre lies. We have respected Gernika, just as we respect all that is Spanish.'" Aguirre, op. cit., p 50. Gen Mola, in command of the attacking Insurgent forces, had threatened the destruction of the Biscay province and "the capital of a perverted people who dare to oppose the irresistible cause of the national idea." This threat had been contained in leaflets dropped from Insurgent planes. Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., p 4237, 6 May 1937. Sen Borah's state of Idaho numbers among its people some 30,000 Basque sheepherders. Aguirre, op. cit., p 50. See also F. L. Schuman, Europe on the Eve, 1942, p 546. Foltz, op. cit., p 52, asserts that American aviation gasoline, sold by an American oil company to the Rebels, powered the planes which attacked Guernica.

<sup>98</sup>Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., Appendix, pp 1225-1226, 20 May 1937. This is a reprint of an article in the New York Herald Tribune, 10 May 1936, and was inserted in the Record by Sen Gerald P. Nye, North Dakota. See also R. L. Buell, "U. S. Neutrality in the Spanish Conflict," Foreign Policy Reports, XIII:206-216, 15 Nov 1937. The protest was signed by 7 U. S. Senators, 2 state governors, and such leaders as Henry L. Stimson, Newton D. Baker, Alf Landon, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Charles P. Taft, 2nd, etc.

war.<sup>99</sup> The League of Nations "'condemned'" the bombardment.<sup>100</sup> Similar protests were made from British<sup>101</sup> and French sources and even some German military leaders were said to have deplored the attack and its methods.<sup>102</sup> A French writer, Pertinax, foreign editor of L'Echo de Paris, said that orders for the massacre had gone to the Condor Legion directly from General Göring, "anxious to show the unconvinced German general staff what his air force could do."<sup>103</sup> Outside of Insurgent Spain and the pro-Franco elements in Germany and Italy, it is doubtful that many condoned the attack on Guernica.<sup>104</sup> Even the belated and obviously biased official

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<sup>99</sup>The picketing was organized by the American League against War and Fascism. Buell, loc. cit., p 214.

<sup>100</sup>Aguirre, op. cit., p 50.

<sup>101</sup>The British government proposed to Paris, Moscow, Rome, Lisbon, and Berlin that an international inquiry into the bombing be carried out. The French and Russians agreed, the Italians and Portuguese raised objections, and Germany did not reply to the proposal. J. M. Spaight, Air Power and War Rights, 3rd edition, 1947, p 255. Later London asked Washington, Stockholm, and Oslo to join in an international commission "to investigate on the spot all alleged instances of unjustifiable bombardments." No agreement could be reached, and the British sent a team of two officers to Spain to make a report. Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Hermann, op. cit., p 183.

<sup>103</sup>Time, XXIX:22, 10 May 1937. See Great Britain, Admiralty, Spain and Portugal, 1944, III:34; and Beumelburg, op. cit., pp 86-98.

<sup>104</sup>One amusing note of approval is contained in a citation of a letter from a Mr. A. Scott-Gatty to The Church Times (London). He writes on the letterhead of The Savage Club, "'Your expressed attitude to the bombing of Guernica by the Spanish Nationalists or their friends is a little naive, is it not? . . . In these days of logical viewpoints the destruction

investigation admitted the damage and the horror, while absolving the Franco forces of blame. In its 14-point conclusion, the committee flatly asserted that there were no visible signs of the explosion of aerial bombs within the town, and most of the other conclusions were as farfetched as this one.<sup>105</sup> This is not the place to confute these findings in detail. The Duchess of Atholl does this admirably and minutely in her book, and other writers have likewise successfully attacked the committee's work.<sup>106</sup> Even so enthusiastic an apologist for the Franco cause as the British correspondent Cardozo, who decries the importance given to the affair of Guernica, says, "Certainly Guernica had been bombed by Nationalist planes, and many of these were presumably of German or Italian origin and had, perhaps, German or Italian pilots."<sup>107</sup> Another pro-Franco writer accused the Loyalists of exploiting the attack, which he does not deny as having occurred, for propaganda purposes.<sup>108</sup>

We have ample accounts of the damage to Guernica and

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of civilians is in order. I personally think it is both salutary and suitable. It gives the common people a sense of responsibility and broadens the outlook of the survivors on world affairs." New Republic, LXXXI:191, 23 Jun 1937.

<sup>105</sup>Burgos Government, op. cit., pp 15-16.

<sup>106</sup>Atholl, op. cit., pp 160-163.

<sup>107</sup>Cardozo, op. cit., p 281.

<sup>108</sup>Knoblauch, op. cit., p 176.

discussions of the international implications of the attack, but we have very few reports of the immediate reactions of the population.<sup>109</sup> Partly this is because most of the inhabitants who survived the bombing either fled to the countryside as soon as the attack began and did not return for several days, or remained hidden in cellars and other shelters during the worst of the bombing and fires. And partly this silence was the result of the censorship imposed upon the citizens by the Franco forces which took over the city on 29 April. Those who stayed in Guernica under the Insurgent conquerors would hardly have been likely to have come forward with descriptions of the bombings even if they had been eyewitnesses.<sup>110</sup> The Duchess of Atholl mentions the accounts of a few of the inhabitants of Guernica who saw the attack, as well as that of some one she merely identifies as "the

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<sup>109</sup>"The few remaining survivors sat at the road's edge, dazed, frozen with grief. It was as if they had suddenly become insane. It was so quiet. There was only the sound of the licking flames, and the faint rustling of the wind, and the weird cries of the animals in their panic, while from high in the mountains little empty homes echoed the silence." Aguirre, *op. cit.*, pp 49-50.

<sup>110</sup>Apropos of this, there is a "convincing Spanish ring about the reply alleged to have been made by a staff officer at Burgos to a Nationalist who complained that the few remaining inhabitants of Guernica would tell the foreign correspondent whom he was escorting that Guernica had been destroyed by aeroplanes. 'Nonsense,' the staff officer is reported to have said, 'we bombed it and bombed it and bombed it and, bueno, why not!'" Duff, *loc. cit.*, pp 71-72, quoting (London) The Sunday Times, 17 Oct 1937.



correspondent of the Star.<sup>111</sup> G. L. Steer, who is generally credited with having sent the most vivid despatches from Guernica following the raid, reconstructed the scenes of the afternoon and evening of 26 April in his book. Excerpts from those pages are reproduced here as the most accurate account of the effect of the bombings upon the civilians which the incident produced.

Steer says that up until the time the Junker 52s dropped "great torpedoes weighing a thousand" pounds, hitting buildings and penetrating shelters, the "spirit of the people had been good, but now they panicked. . . . As the terrified population streamed out of the town [an escort of Heinkel 51s] dived low to drill them with their guns." He continues:

The terrified people lay face down in the ditches, pressed their backs against tree trunks, coiled themselves in holes, shut their eyes and ran across the sweet green open meadow. Many were foolish and fled back before the aerial tide into the village. It was then that the heavy bombing of Gernika began.

[Between 1715 and 1945 flights of from three to twelve Heinkel 111 and Junker 52 planes bombed the town] without mercy and with system. . . .

There was much groaning in Gernika, much breathless work to dig out wounded people before the next planes came.

. . . the priests spoke to the people to keep them calm. By now something like a spirit of passive resistance had been built up in them. Gernika's face was turning to

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<sup>111</sup>Atholl, op. cit., pp 154-158. See also statement of Canon Alberto Onoindia, of Valladolid Cathedral, as reported in Time, XXIX:22, 10 May 1937. See also Aguirre, op. cit., p 50.

ashes, everybody's face in Gernika was ash-gray, but terror had reached a condition of submissive stubbornness not seen before in Vizcaya.

. . . . .  
Nobody now bothered to save relatives or possessions; between bombardments they walked out of Gernika in front of the stifling smoke and sat in bewildered hundreds on the roads to Bermeo and Mugika. . . . The people were worn out by noise, heat and terror; they lay about like dirty bundles of washing, mindless, sprawling and immobile.

[At 1945 the last attacking plane left, and the people, beginning] to talk and to try to understand their experience . . . asked each other how many planes had attacked their town. Some said eighty, others one hundred, others two hundred, others more. They could not tell: but those who were outside Gernika the whole afternoon say that between forty and fifty German planes attacked her, including ten fighters. The bombers appeared again and again with fresh loads.

To the people within Gernika it was not a question of figures, but of inquantitative and immeasurable terror. All they could hear was the drumbeat of engines and the split of the explosions again and again until they sounded dull enough. They could see no more but the trembling doors of their refuges and their own helpless faces, and sometimes if they were in the streets the points of fire where the silver tubes struck. . . . Sometimes, too, before they bolted below they saw through the smoke the stiff, stubborn wings of the planes which molested them and heard the wingless flight of the metal that spurted blindly all over the town, crushing walls and roof tiles and stripping trees of their leaves and branches.<sup>112</sup>

All the foregoing, it may be remarked, is a pretty good reconstruction of the scene by one who was not there. Steer arrived in Guernica a couple of hours after the attack, but had been able to see the flames rising from the city for fifteen miles before he reached the stricken town. He

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<sup>112</sup>Steer, Tree, pp 238-242.

immediately set about questioning as many survivors as he could find and poking into the ruins to secure evidences of bombing and burning. As he had been in Guernica the day before the bombardment he was able to make direct comparisons with his earlier observations, and, later, to refute some of the more fantastic assertions of the Insurgents that much of the damage had been inflicted by the Basque terrorists in the city before any planes had come near the town. As Steer writes, "The destruction of Gernika was not only a horrible thing to see: it led to some of the most horrible and consistent lying heard by Christian ears since Ananias was carried out feet foremost to his long, central-heated home."<sup>113</sup> The charges and countercharges went on,<sup>114</sup> but the style inaugurated by the German aviators at Guernica set a new fashion in warfare, a fashion that told the world there was more to fighting a war than pitting opposing armies and navies against each other, that undefended cities were as likely targets as fortified lines and armored vessels.

The bombing of Guernica apparently stiffened the already

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid., p 246.

<sup>114</sup>For a review of some of these countercharges see R. Brasillach & M. Bardèche, Histoire de la guerre d'Espagne, [1939], especially pp 297-299 and 321-322. Incidentally, one of the authors of this pro-Franco volume was (Brasillach) shot by the French in 1944 for "intelligence with the enemy." L. Noël, L'Agression allemande contre la Pologne, [1946], p 229.

defiant Basques to sell their homeland dearly.<sup>115</sup> But the pattern of action against Guernica gave the Franco Insurgent authorities, and more particularly the German Luftwaffe command in Spain, unmistakable proof that resistance was susceptible of neutralization by vicious incendiary attacks upon civilian settlements.<sup>116</sup>

From this time until the end of the war's first year in July 1937, most of the aerial bombardment effort was contributed by the Rebels — generally German planes and pilots with a few Italians in the Bilbao area, Italian aviators along the Mediterranean coast.<sup>117</sup> Bilbao received constant attention through April, May, and into June. "According to the [London] Daily Telegraph of June 14th, 10,000 bombs were dropped on it in one day. The refugees were then attacked with machine-guns and light fragmentation bombs."<sup>118</sup> In

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<sup>115</sup>"Basque Shambles," Literary Digest, CXXIII:14-15, 8 May 1937. See also Aguirre, op. cit., p 5; and Beumelburg, op. cit., p 162.

<sup>116</sup>"The Nazis learned a lot in Spain. They learned in Guernica that bombs could really raze a defenseless town or city. . . . The destruction of Guernica through merciless bombing . . . had no strategic importance at all. It simply proved to the Luftwaffe the extent to which any given town or city could be pounded, if there were no defenses." Hermann, op. cit., pp 179 and 183.

<sup>117</sup>Aguirre, op. cit., p 68, mentions the presence of Italians on the Bilbao front. Beumelburg, op. cit., p 110, boasts that the Condor Legion prided itself on having seized the initiative in Mar 1937 when it proposed to Franco the attack on Bilbao.

<sup>118</sup>Haldane, op. cit., p 50. See Life, II:68, 72, 31 May 1937, for the first pictures published in that weekly of the effects of the bombings on Bilbao.

mid-June President Aguirre of the Basque Republic moved his government to Santander, 75 miles further east on the Bay of Biscay, leaving the administration of Bilbao to a junta of defense. The German planes dropped leaflets on Bilbao, urging the surrender of the city to avoid added bloodshed, and reports indicated that the civilian population was gripped by panic.<sup>119</sup> Before the city surrendered on 18 June it had received punishment as severe as that vented upon Guernica, if not so totally destructive. Other towns in the Basque provinces underwent similar assaults as the defenses surrounding Bilbao were softened for the kill. Amorebieta, a village on the road between Durango and Bilbao, some 14 miles from the latter city, was bombed by German fliers on 14 May with incendiaries, "but not continuously: they did not want to start a huge fire and another nasty story."<sup>120</sup> Again on 17 May Amorebieta was bombed with incendiaries and high explosives.<sup>121</sup> Then the Insurgents captured the village and issued reports that the Basque terrorists had fired the town before evacuating it.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>Brassilach & Bardèche, *op. cit.*, p 300. See also Aguirre, *op. cit.*, pp 66-68, for accounts of the last days of the siege.

<sup>120</sup>Steer, *Tree*, p 275. He adds: "I saw this bombardment and picked up the unexploded incendiary bombs. They were of a slightly smaller German type than those used at Gernika . . . and the thermite mixture was more active." P 275.

<sup>121</sup>Atholl, *op. cit.*, p 163.

<sup>122</sup>Steer, *Tree*, p 275.

Another Basque town to feel the full strength of the Luftwaffe's blows was Galdocano, close to Amorebieta, which suffered several heavy bombings through late April and mid-May.<sup>123</sup> The German aviators evoked special denunciations for their actions in the 19 May raid when they bombed a number of women and children seeking refuge in an empty field, killing 15 of them. This action and the deliberate destruction of a historic church at Galdocano brought vigorous protests from Americans directed against the Franco government and its use of terroristic air attacks.<sup>124</sup>

But it was the constant bombing of Bilbao which aroused the greatest indignation in the American, British, and French press. With German-piloted planes machine-gunning the inhabitants of the city "when they ran in terror, fleeing the explosions and fires that surrounded them," and bombs dropping in the center of the city's poorest quarters, local Basque priests petitioned the Vatican to intercede to stop the horrible slaughter.<sup>125</sup> Doctors sent to Bilbao by British and French charitable organizations to examine Basque children prior to evacuating them to points of safety outside Spain found "the air raids so constant that children could only be

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<sup>123</sup>Atholl, op. cit., p 163, and World Committee against War and Fascism, op. cit., pp 17 and 20.

<sup>124</sup>"The Week," New Republic, LXXXXI:141-144, 16 June 1937.

<sup>125</sup>Literary Digest, CXXIII:11, 19 June 1937.

examined by night. A final raid carried out during their embarkation killed eleven, and prevented over one hundred others from joining the ship."<sup>126</sup> The city held out for a while, but was forced to capitulate, as has been mentioned, on 18 June. With the fall of Bilbao, aerial activity in the Bay of Biscay area ceased and the scene shifted to the southern coasts of the Peninsula.

Valencia had its worst air raid of the war up to that date when at least 200 were killed and about 50 buildings destroyed on 28 May. The American Socialist, Norman Thomas, was present upon this occasion and, "uninjured but considerably ruffled," is reported as remarking: "It was diabolical. I shall take a first hand report of this to President Roosevelt."<sup>127</sup> At almost the same time Barcelona was subjected to an attack, apparently by Italian planes, with resultant casualties of between 60 and 70 dead, 110-115 wounded.<sup>128</sup>

That the Loyalist forces were not entirely idle during this period is revealed in a statement by a member of the British Parliament relative to the bombing of Merida, a city

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<sup>126</sup>Atholl, op. cit., p 163.

<sup>127</sup>Time, XXIX:22, 7 June 1937. See also World Committee against War and Fascism, op. cit., p 20, for slightly different figures.

<sup>128</sup>This raid was on 29 May 1937 according to the World Committee reports, p 20.

of some 15,000 in Badajoz province forty miles east of the Portugese frontier. He reported that three "Russian" planes had raided the town just before he arrived there, killing 20 and injuring 57 civilians. "It is very difficult to see what military purpose, or what purpose at all, is gained by such attacks. If the idea is to overawe the population it seemed to us to have quite the opposite effect . . . ," he declared.<sup>129</sup> This same touring legislator remarked that he saw many evidences of bombing by "Red" forces on undefended towns far away from the areas of actual warfare.<sup>130</sup> He grants that the Franco forces were doing the same thing, but says that in the case of Madrid the bombings were probably militarily and legally justifiable.

A particularly apt quotation to summarize the effects of aerial bombardment upon the civilian populations during what the Literary Digest called "The Gory Year"<sup>131</sup> is supplied by a Belgian author who wrote, "The Douhet theory has failed to inspire national terror; on the contrary, such tactics have consolidated public sentiment and stiffened the

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<sup>129</sup>E. H. Keeling, "The International Situation: A Tour of Nationalist Spain," Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, LXXXII:388, May 1937.

<sup>130</sup>Loc. cit., pp 387-388.

<sup>131</sup>Literary Digest, CXXIII:11, 19 June 1937.



will to resist to the last."<sup>132</sup> Bombardment of civilian centers from the air had become an accepted part of aerial warfare and the civilian dead of the first year — in both Rebel and Loyalist held territory — were mute witnesses to the new horrors of total war. But, not yet had total war rained from the air broken the will of civilian populations to resist. The cities reduced from the air still had to be captured from the ground in the first phase of the Spanish war.

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<sup>132</sup>Maj Wanty, "Une Année de guerre en Espagne (juillet 1936-juillet 1937)," Bulletin Belge des Sciences Militaires, Jan 1938, digested in The Command and Staff School Quarterly Review of Military Literature, XVIII:70-71, Sep 1938.

CHAPTER VI  
THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: THE FINAL PHASE  
1937 - 1939

While British Labour Party and French Popular Front representatives were in Barcelona for the observance of the first anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, bombing planes appeared over the old section of the Catalan capital at 0500 on 19 July 1937. Small damage was done — only a shattered cornice on a government building and some injury to the cathedral — but Premier Negrin called upon the Franco forces to end what he termed the "barbarous mutilation" of edifices dedicated to God.<sup>1</sup>

This initial raid of the second year of the war seems to have been an evidence of the shifting emphasis of the Insurgent air campaign. During the summer and autumn of 1937 the raids were less severe than they had been in the earlier months. After the capitulation of Bilbao, the Germans on Franco's side appear to have reduced their activity against civilian centers, while the Italians, who never,

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<sup>1</sup>F. Cremascoli, Inferno a Barcellona, [1939], pp 85-86. He indicates his belief that the raid was "staged" by the Loyalists to impress the foreign visitors. He also believes that a second raid on 19 Aug was also "staged," as a British commission of inquiry had arrived at Barcelona from Tolosa on that day. P 86. This is possibly the pair of British officers, Group-Capt R. Smyth-Pigott and Lt Col F. B. Lejeune, mentioned by Spaight, Air Power and War Rights, 3rd edition, p 255.

except at Barcelona, operated with the intensity of the Luftwaffe, confined themselves to regular, but small scale bombardment raids in the South.<sup>2</sup> There is evidence that a number of the Italian and German planes had been transferred to the island of Majorca (or Mallorca, as it is sometimes called) from the bases in the north. Up to this time the southern raids had been carried on largely by Italian planes based on "plane carrying ships."<sup>3</sup>

In the main, the Loyalist forces adhered to their established policy of using their aircraft to bomb front line positions and to attack Insurgent planes and airdromes. There are very few instances on record during the second half of 1937 when the Republican air force, with or without the assistance of Soviet elements, raided populated settlements, and there are no accounts of casualties among civilians caused by bombs from Loyalist planes.

At the beginning of July, Malcolm Cowley, an American writer of liberal persuasion, entered Spain from the French

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<sup>2</sup>The Condor Legion remained active in the northern campaigns until the fall of Gijón on 21 Oct 1937. However, the activity, as well as that of the Italian aircraft which served under the direction of the Luftwaffe command, appears to have been confined for the most part to combat areas. See Beumelburg, op. cit., passim, for descriptions of the Condor Legion's work in northern Spain during the summer and autumn of 1937.

<sup>3</sup>Haldane, op. cit., p 51. See Beumelburg, op. cit., pp 172 ff for disposition of Condor Legion forces in 1937-1938.

frontier at Le Perthus on his way to Barcelona and Valencia. At Gerona, 40 miles into Spain, he had his "first glimpse of what the war means to cities behind the lines." A raid two nights earlier had killed six civilians in a residential area obviously distant from whatever military objective Gerona might have contained. Numerous fishing villages between Gerona and Barcelona had suffered bombardment from the sea or air at the hands of Insurgent forces, and Cowley reported upon the damage he saw. After he arrived at Valencia, Cowley learned that the town of Castellón de la Plana, 40 miles up the coast, through which he had passed two days before, had been subjected to an air raid. So far as he could ascertain, he says,

. . . not a single one of these bombardments . . . had produced any results that even faintly affected the republican armies, except to make them fight harder. All the victims were civilians; most of them women and babies. It was a new kind of warfare, without reason, without honor, a blind malice like that of an idiot boy who has stolen his father's rifle.<sup>4</sup>

During his stay in Valencia, Cowley experienced a mid-night raid which was frustrated by the activity of the Loyalist anti-aircraft defenses. The six raiding planes dropped their bombs in the suburbs, doing very little damage but killing two civilians and injuring a dozen, mostly

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<sup>4</sup>M. Cowley, "To Madrid: I," New Republic, LXXXII:64, 25 Aug 1937.

children.<sup>5</sup> Later Cowley reached Madrid from where he sent a tellingly vivid description of life in the wartime capital.

The following excerpts are quoted:

Of course it is partly fatalism, that famous Spanish fatalism about which we have heard so much and so often. But after a few days you become convinced that it is something else besides. The Madrileños love their city, and they promise neither to leave it nor surrender it to the enemy. Since last November they have become so deeply involved in the fight to keep it that everything else has become incidental.

. . . . .

Life goes on in Madrid, and the visitor becomes involved in it almost against his will. He may have been frightened by air raids elsewhere — as I was frightened in Valencia by bombs that dropped three miles away — but in Madrid he sees children watching the fascist planes and he is ashamed of being more timid than little girls. Gradually he is seized with an excitement that is mixed with elation. Sleep becomes almost impossible. Instead of dozing in the hot afternoon, he wanders through the streets. Instead of hurrying off to dinner before the restaurants close, he watches two fascist bombers circling the pale moon, and cheers the snub-nosed Russian pursuit planes that drive them back into the sunset. Instead of going to bed, he climbs to the roof of his hotel — as I did on the fourth night of my visit — to see the sky cut into a checkerboard by powerful searchlights. . . . I should have been full of pity for the sleeping city, but instead I felt what was almost a frenzy of admiration.<sup>6</sup>

Describing further experiences in Madrid in July, Cowley observed the behavior of Madrid children. "After eight months

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<sup>5</sup>M. Cowley, "To Madrid: II," New Republic, LXXXII:94, 1 Sep 1937.

<sup>6</sup>Loc. cit., p 96. See also Cowley's article, "To Madrid: III, Offensive on Two Fronts," New Republic, LXXXII:152-155, 15 Sep 1937, for a good description of Madrid during an artillery shelling on 6 Jul 1937.

of living under siege," he says, "they seemed to be absolutely without fear. When the Fascist planes came over, their mothers called them into the houses, but they didn't always obey; it was much more exciting to watch an air battle from the streets."<sup>7</sup> Other writers who visited Madrid at this time reported in like vein, and usually with the same unrestrained praise for the civilians as Cowley employed.

Francesca Wilson, who had performed relief work in the years after World War I, as well as during that conflict, wrote of the indomitable courage of the women and children of the city, and their brightness under adversity. She told how queues formed everywhere and spoke of one vegetable cart with a long line of women stretched behind it. The women, "alert and brisk," had "put their hands on the shoulders in front of them and were dancing and singing."<sup>8</sup> The Duchess of Atholl remarked on much the same spirit displayed by the women. As with others, she found the strongest impression of a visit to Madrid that of "the calm courage of the people."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>M. Cowley, "To Madrid: IV, Three Spanish Kids," New Republic, LXXXII:179-182, 22 Sep 1937.

<sup>8</sup>Wilson, op. cit., pp 194-196.

<sup>9</sup>See Duchess of Atholl, "My Impressions of Spain," The Scotsman, 29 Apr 1937 and 1 May 1937. See also J. Dos Passos, Journeys between Wars, 1938, p 372, for a not too complimentary opinion upon the visiting British Duchess, who most probably was Katherine Marjory Ramsay Stewart-Murray, Duchess of Atholl, to the effect that "why should a goddam lousy etcetera duchess eat three courses when a hard working American newspaperman has to go hungry?" P 372.

The autumn of 1937 was, as has been indicated, relatively quiet and both the Loyalist and Insurgent populations were becoming better disciplined, better organized, and better cared for through air raid precaution measures. At Teruel, one correspondent reported, ". . . the people have become so accustomed to air raids that one moment the streets are full of chattering men, women, and children, and the next completely void." Teruel was in Rebel hands, and the account continued that in the October raids on that town by Loyalist planes "no fuss, excitement or panic" occurred during the attack.<sup>10</sup> In the South, at Valencia, the American playwright Lillian Hellman wrote that, after the warning sirens sounded, "a few people began to run, but most people stopped, suddenly, and then moved on again more swiftly. . . . people were standing quietly in the open square looking up." The populace, she noted, was calm in the midst of this October raid in which Italian planes killed 63 civilians in the port area of the town.<sup>11</sup> Another impression of Valencia under the raids of the autumn of 1937 recorded that:

The feature of the city which caused perhaps most surprise in view of what one had read, was the atmosphere of confidence and cheerful good will prevailing. There was no sense of strain, no suggestion of apprehension or suspicion amongst the people in the streets or the cafes and

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<sup>10</sup>J. F. C. Fuller, "Life, Work and War in Nationalist Spain," United Services Review, LXXVII:5-6, 25 Nov 1937.

<sup>11</sup>L. Hellman, "Day in Spain," New Republic, LXXXIV: 297-298, 13 Apr 1938.

hotel dining rooms. . . . People were talking freely in normal tones to one another in the streets. They were courteous and helpful to foreign visitors.<sup>12</sup>

From the Aragon front in September 1937, Ernest Hemingway, whose enthusiasm for the Loyalist cause was well known, reported on the furious fighting for the town of Belchite, a rail point 25 or 30 miles southeast of Saragossa. The town was a legitimate military objective and it was bombed heavily by Loyalist artillery in an attempt to dislodge the Franco forces which were stubbornly defending it. As soon as the Loyalists had taken the town, the Insurgent planes attacked, apparently killing many of their own troops which had been taken prisoner by the Loyalists. Belchite, says Hemingway, "had such a smell of death from the bodies in the smashed houses that the Government burial squads digging to reach them were unable to remain there without gasmasks."<sup>13</sup> Among the dead must have been a number of civilians, but no casualty figures are given for this raid.

In November, when Franco's planes attacked the towns of Lerida and Barbastro, the former an important rail and road junction between Barcelona and Saragossa, the latter a less important road center in Huesca province 40 miles northwest of Lerida, 300 civilians were killed. "One of Lerida's bombs

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<sup>12</sup>By an Observer, "A Glimpse of the War in Spain," Canadian Defence Quarterly, XV:197, Jan 1938.

<sup>13</sup>E. Hemingway, The Spanish War, 1938, pp 35-36.



landed smack on a public school, killed 70 children. Hundreds of adults were shot down by planes furiously strafing the streets."<sup>14</sup> Immediately thereafter Loyalist planes blew up a munitions dump at Saragossa, but the Republicans hastened to explain "that this was not retaliation for earlier bombings of Lerida and Barbastro."<sup>15</sup>

Madrid was relatively free from attack by planes during the autumn months although it was shelled spasmodically by artillery.<sup>16</sup> Because the reactions of civilians to shelling must have been somewhat the same as their behavior under aerial bombardment, this report from the Spanish capital is given as an example of the temper of the Madrilenos in the second autumn of the war:

They seem to be standing the ordeal with great courage. A shell falling near to any street seems to lead to only mild activity amongst the people in the street. Children are called by their mothers into the houses. Pedestrians move without loss of dignity but also without loss of time, to the nearest substantial building. For perhaps fifteen minutes or so the life of the street is stilled. Then, if nothing further happens, the street comes to

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<sup>14</sup>Time, XXX:21, 15 Nov 1937. The raid on Lerida was probably the one of 2 Nov in which the casualties are listed by the World Committee against War and Fascism, op. cit., p 28, as "215 mort dont 56 enfants 700 blessés."

<sup>15</sup>Time, XXX:21, 15 Nov 1937, italics in original. The account added: "Because their strength depends entirely on their hold on the populous lower classes, Leftist strategists have scrupulously avoided bombing civilian centres." Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>V. Sheean, Not Peace but a Sword, 1939, pp 165-166, mentions the calm with which some Madrid citizens faced the shelling at this time.

life again. The children re-appear and resume their games. The older folk resume their gossiping or go about their business. There is no sign of panic, nothing to indicate that these people regard with anything but unshaken courage the fact that death may at any moment enter their street with the scream and crash of a shell.<sup>17</sup>

Toward the end of the year, Barcelona felt the brunt of the Insurgent air attacks. In December a series of raids, largely by night, caused death and devastation in the slum areas near the port. The planes, apparently based on Majorca, came in at a great height and at high speed, dropping their bombs and turning back to their bases before the projectiles reached their targets.<sup>18</sup> Up to this time "not all Catalans were enthusiastic for the Republican cause. General Franco's aeroplanes over Barcelona . . . gave an impetus to recruiting and unified the Catalan nation in support of their Government."<sup>19</sup> Between 25 December 1937 and 20 January 1938,

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<sup>17</sup>Canadian Defence Quarterly, loc. cit., p 200. See World Committee against War and Fascism, op. cit., pp 26-31, for a listing of the artillery bombardments of Madrid during Oct, Nov, and Dec 1937, with casualties.

<sup>18</sup>Haldane, op. cit., p 51. The World Committee report lists raids on 7 Dec with 50 killed, 100 wounded, on 8 Dec with insignificant damage, and on 19 Dec with 13 dead, 21 wounded. Op. cit., pp 30-31.

<sup>19</sup>J. R. J. Macnamara, "Can War Be Humanized? Bombing Civilians," United Services Review, LXXVII:5, 30 Jun 1938. The Republican Government had been removed from Valencia to Barcelona in early November, a move which one correspondent, Irving Pflaum, of the United Press, interpreted as an indication that the Catalan morale was weakening under aerial bombardments and the Loyalists hoped to gain Catalan support for the cause by settling its headquarters in the midst of the wavering civilians. Time, XXX:21-22, 15 Nov 1937.

according to one account, Barcelona underwent 77 raids in which 273 were killed and 456 injured. "Nevertheless during this time there was nothing like a general panic, although people in the streets did not disdain to run for shelter. However, life was fairly normal in between the raids. . . . Indeed there was a little too much of the 'business as usual' attitude in some quarters," Haldane wrote.<sup>20</sup>

Hemingway, who had accompanied the Loyalist troops from Belchite to the front before Teruel, reported from there on the fighting to gain that strategically located city which commanded the confluence of the Guadalaviar and Albarracin rivers and the main road to Valencia, 88 miles away to the southeast. As the attacking forces drew near the city, the Loyalist Government called upon the inhabitants to evacuate the town, promising safe conduct to all, regardless of age, sex, politics, or military affiliation, who would leave by the Sagunto road before 0900 on 19 December. After that time, the Government radio and messages said, Teruel would be regarded as a military objective and might be bombed at will. When the Loyalists took the town, the populace greeted the victors enthusiastically. "They said they had stayed in the cellars and caves when the offer from the Government came to evacuate, because the Fascists had not let them leave.

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<sup>20</sup>Haldane, op. cit., pp 52-53.

Also they said the Government had not bombed the town, only the military objectives. They said this, not I," Hemingway asserts. "They said it because after we have been reading in the papers just received in Madrid from New York and still in the car today, about General Franco giving the Government five days to surrender before starting his final triumphal offensive, it seemed just a little incongruous, should we say, to be walking to-night into Teruel, that great rebel strong point from which they were to start their drive to the sea."<sup>21</sup>

In January 1938, Loyalist planes raided the important Rebel city of Salamanca for the first time when a flight of 20 large bombers dropped 1,000 pound bombs on the town, causing "a frightened shouting mob" to crowd into a refugio.<sup>22</sup> The number of casualties for this raid is not given, and, of course, the records of the World Committee against War and Fascism do not list raids by Loyalist aircraft upon Insurgent cities. An attack by Loyalist aircraft on Sevilla at this same time killed 24, including 11 children and 3 women, with five tons of bombs. These two raids marked what was termed a change of policy on the part of the

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<sup>21</sup>Hemingway, op. cit., pp 46-51. See F. von Forell, Mölders und seine Männer, 1941, pp 9-10, for indications that fresh Luftwaffe arrivals led to increased air attacks by the Rebels on the Teruel front during the winter of 1937-1938.

<sup>22</sup>Time, XXXI:13, 31 Jan 1938.

Republican Government.<sup>23</sup> However, on 28 January, the Loyalist authorities said they "would welcome any initiative to put an end to the bombing of open towns." This offer was met by "an insolent refusal" by Franco to "have any agreement with 'the Prieto-Azanist horde.'" The Loyalist Government ordered an air raid on Salamanca as a reprisal, but on receiving a proposal from the French and British Governments that bombing of open towns should cease, it issued an order that no more raids should be made deep into rebel territory." However, "even in the face of a protest from the Pope, General Franco would not abandon 'proper freedom of action.'"<sup>24</sup>

As the raids in the South grew in intensity through January it was clear that the Franco forces were determined to concentrate their aerial activity against the remaining Loyalist strongholds along the Mediterranean, principally Barcelona, Valencia, Tarragona, Reus, and other points. Italian planes dropped "enormous bombs on the crowded, industrial and residential sections" of Barcelona in late January,

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid. "After a series of Nationalist air-raids on Valencia during the first fortnight of January 1938, the Government at Barcelona decided to adopt reprisals, and during the third and fourth weeks of January there were Republican air-raids on Salamanca, Seville, Ceuta, and Valladolid. This Republican action only provoked the Nationalists into intensifying their own attacks, particularly upon Barcelona." K. Duff, "The War in Spain and Its Repercussions, (v) The Powers and Humanitarian Activities in Spain," Survey of International Affairs, 1938, 1941, I:403-404.

<sup>24</sup>Atholl, Searchlight on Spain, p 253.

killing 400 civilians and wounding more than 800 in five minutes.<sup>25</sup> This was, no doubt, the air raid of 25 January directed against the center of the city.<sup>26</sup> The first of the "Terror Raids" occurred on 30 January, when Italian planes from Majorca caused 350 casualties, eighty of them children.<sup>27</sup> It is not clear whether this is the same raid referred to by Haldane as having taken place on 31 January, but it would seem to be from the similarity of the casualty figures given by him and by Oliveria, and other sources.<sup>28</sup> The figures for casualties on this raid are indefinite, as Haldane remarks. Of the London papers reporting what Haldane calls the January 31st attack, the Daily Worker estimated the lowest number, 300. The News Chronicle made two guesses, 700 and 1,000. And both the Herald and the Daily Mail cited the top figure of 1,000.<sup>29</sup>

Barcelona enjoyed some respite from air attacks through February while Valencia was made a target for bombings by

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<sup>25</sup>Time, XXXI:13, 31 Jan 1938.

<sup>26</sup>A. R. Oliveira, Politics, Economics, and Men of Modern Spain, 1946, p 605.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., and Salter, op. cit., pp 163-164.

<sup>28</sup>Compare Haldane, op. cit., p 53; Oliveira, op. cit., p 605; and World Committee against War and Fascism, op. cit., p 34.

<sup>29</sup>Haldane, op. cit., p 53. The World Committee's report lists no raid on Barcelona for that date, but does give the one for 30 Jan with 153 killed, 108 wounded. Op. cit., p 34.

Insurgent planes.<sup>30</sup> By the end of February, according to one reckoning, Barcelona had been subjected to some 25 raids in a year with 900 persons killed and 2,500 injured.<sup>31</sup> A raid on 26 January aimed at Valencia killed 143 and wounded 208, while half a dozen lesser raids during the two months accounted for numerous casualties.<sup>32</sup> Other towns also continued to be bombed repeatedly. In the operations on the Ebro front, Belchite was attacked on 10 March "with the thunder of the heaviest bombs" of the Condor Legion. When the German and Spanish tanks entered the town that afternoon, "the village was a single heap of rubble."<sup>33</sup> A three hour bombardment on 2 April by German and Italian planes on Lerida, called by Sheean "one of the worst of the war," laid waste the town and killed a number of civilians.<sup>34</sup>

The most sustained bombing offensive by the Insurgents during the entire war took place against Barcelona in the

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<sup>30</sup>Time, XXXI:13, 31 Jan 1938.

<sup>31</sup>N. de P. MacRoberts, A. R. P. Lessons from Barcelona, [1938], p 8.

<sup>32</sup>World Committee against War and Fascism, op. cit., pp 32-37. The bombing of a Valencia tenement district, presumably on 26 Jan, was termed by Loyalist Defense Minister Indalecio Prieto as an Insurgent "'attempt to assassinate' seven British Laborite M. P.'s who had been visiting Valencia's law courts . . . ." Time, XXXI:13, 31 Jan 1938.

<sup>33</sup>Beumelburg, op. cit., pp 211-212.

<sup>34</sup>Sheean, op. cit., pp 85-86. See Salter, op. cit., pp 262-263.

Spring of 1938. For three days in mid-March the city was subjected to 13 raids which were reported to have killed as many as 3,000 and wounded upwards of 25,000 persons.<sup>35</sup> These raids "succeeded in doing what the others had not, namely in creating a panic. About a quarter of the population ran out into the country. Some were, of course, killed in the streets by splinters or blast. Others lost their heads completely, and tried to dig holes in the streets,"<sup>36</sup> says Haldane. But another writer observes that "neither in material damage nor on the score of morale can any decisive results be credited

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<sup>35</sup>Between 2208 on 16 Mar and 1519 on 18 Mar, the period of the raids, the following figures and sources are given:

<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Source</u>
3,000	25,000 plus	J. Langdon-Davies, <u>Air Raid</u> , 1938, p 14.
870	1,500 seriously	Atholl, <u>Searchlight on Spain</u> , p 253.
1,300	2,000	Oliveira, <u>op. cit.</u> , p 605.
900	1,500	Davy, <u>op. cit.</u> , p 124.
1,300	2,000	Haldane, <u>op. cit.</u> , p 54.
912		<u>Ibid.</u> , pp 284-285, citing F. Skinner, in <u>Architect's Journal</u> , 16 and 23 Jun 1938.
1,000	1,700	MacRoberts, <u>op. cit.</u> , p 9.
Très nombreuses victimes		World Committee against War and Fascism, <u>op. cit.</u> , pp 39-40.
834	1,279	<u>Ibid.</u> , p 53.
875	2,000	<u>Journal of the Royal United Service Institution</u> , LXXXIII: 407, May 1938.

<sup>36</sup>Haldane, op. cit., p 55. He was not in Barcelona at the time, nor did he go there subsequently while the war was on. Ibid., p 284.



to the attackers."<sup>37</sup>

M. J. B. Davy, in discussing the effects of the March raids, has this to say:

The psychological aspect of the . . . raids is the most interesting and probably the most important. Reactions to the bombing varied. Some people seemed as much affected by the noise of the anti-aircraft guns as by the bombs, doubtless because they were not accustomed to either and could not distinguish between friend and foe. Others remembered most vividly the clouds of dust raised, blinding and choking, and the acrid smell of fumes. Imaginative terrors were found to afflict some more than the reality of lacerated flesh and spreading pools of blood. To some the sight of the dead was less fearful than the torments of the wounded; it was entirely a question of individuality. The mass reaction was different to that of the individual. Observers noted that the determination of the Catalan people to fight to the bitter end to preserve their independence was entirely unaffected by the series of reverses which their forces had suffered in the field; that the dangers of battle were something which they understood and, as a courageous race, were not afraid to face. But the ever-present menace of death from the air was quite another matter, and the uncertainty and suspense of that peril appeared to have shaken the nerve of even the bravest.

. . . . .

In spite of this — and it is here that the mass reaction was determined — the people realized the importance of calm, and made gallant efforts to carry on unperturbed as if everything were normal. . . . though Barcelona suffered momentarily it soon picked up. . . . The majority of competent observers of these raids seem to have agreed that the psychological effect was most significant, and the only way to counter it was by psychological means, the chief defence being to have a job to do. It was suggested that the problem was not so much to protect this or that military objective, but the chief

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<sup>37</sup>MacRoberts, op. cit., p 9. He was in Barcelona, in April 1938. Davy, who was not there, gives a very good description of the raids, gathered from a number of sources. Op. cit., pp 122-124.

military objective of all — the nerves of the people.<sup>38</sup>

According to Davy, the raids "came very near to destroying the morals of all Barcelona, for the time being at any rate . . . ."<sup>39</sup>

The most complete available analysis of the effects of the forty-eight hours of bombing upon the civilian populace is contained in John Langdon-Davies' book, Air Raid, from which the following extensive quotation is taken:

. . . thanks to the Italo-German manoeuvres over Barcelona . . . , we can make a very clear analysis of what happens when an air fleet attacks a large population congregated in a city.

The manoeuvres were intended to solve a technical problem and also to see how far its solution would be valuable in a future war.

. . . . .  
March 16th-17th-18th in Barcelona made most A. R. P. literature obsolete.

. . . . .  
. . . from the point of view of the Art of War the operation was the most satisfactory and potentially important since the beginning of hostilities. Its interest lies not in the number of people that were killed, but in what happened to those left alive.

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<sup>38</sup>Davy, op. cit., pp 124-125. Salter, op. cit., pp 166-171 and 175-178 contains a good account of the effects of the raids upon him as an individual. He says: "There is reason to believe that Franco and his backers in Rome and Berlin thought that this offensive would be the knockout blow. If it could have been sustained for even a little longer perhaps it would have been, but neither men nor machines could maintain the pace." Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Davy, op. cit., pp 123-124.

The lessons to be learned are most important in the field of psychology. The object of the manoeuvre was itself psychological. The aim was not casualties, but the creation of panic. The technique employed was designed to nullify existing Defence measures against panic. It succeeded.

I was unable to find anyone who did not frankly admit that he was reduced to a state of impotent terror by the end of the period, and careful observers went so far as to suggest that had the technique been used for another forty-eight hours there would have been a total paralysis of the life of the city and the power to resist.

Indeed, it is something of a mystery why the raids were broken off when their continuance could have achieved so much. The reason could not have been a technical one. There was no attrition. No machines or personnel were lost. The cost was not prohibitive. The Defence had contrived no new countermeasures. It would seem that some political cause in the sphere of international diplomacy came into action to terminate the manoeuvres, unless the German technicians felt that they had learned all they needed, so that any further experiments were purposeless. Or perhaps the continuance of the raids would have taught the English and French too much.

[There was not time for an alarmed population to reach shelters; . . . on no occasion did anyone spend a period of danger in a shelter; the shelter was reached when the danger was already passed — unless, of course, a person took up permanent residence at the beginning of the forty hours and remained there until the end.]

[These forty hours were spent] in a succession of moods

- (a) thirteen periods of two minutes — danger plus fear;
- (b) nine hours and seven minutes of fear without danger;
- (c) thirty hours forty-two minutes free of danger, but with growing suspense ending in catastrophe.

In short, twenty-six minutes of visits from half a dozen bombers themselves scarcely in danger destroyed the whole

mental life of a million and a half people for forty hours.<sup>40</sup>

As in the affair of Guernica of the year before, the mass bombings of Barcelona captured the headlines of all the world.<sup>41</sup> The fact that Barcelona was the first of the globe's modern large cities to undergo intensive aerial bombardment, for the assaults on Madrid had been much less in scope, if more numerous, caused speculation among the inhabitants of other large cities as to the possible effects of total war upon their own municipalities. While the bulk of the writings after the Guernica bombings had been emotional, the volume of literature following the Barcelona raids took a more considered cognizance of the morale and sociological factors.

Langdon-Davies' account continued with some observations on the results of the bombings as he observed them among the people of Barcelona. Again, liberal quotation from his book appears to be the best way to present the picture. He wrote:

It was impossible to find anyone in Barcelona who was not willing to admit frankly that terror seized him. By the third day the city was in physical flight. Long straggling lines of people carrying their bedding and a

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<sup>40</sup>Langdon-Davies, op. cit., pp 12-16, 31-34. Italics in original text.

<sup>41</sup>Oliveira, op. cit., pp 605-606, comments as follows: "The excesses of the Fascist Air Forces in Franco's service finally aroused the open disgust of the whole world, though the reaction was not as energetic as the occasion warranted. The Pope protested to the Burgos Junta or Government. The Governments of Paris and London agreed to make representations to both sides in Spain, with a view to stopping air raids like the ones on Barcelona." Italics in the original.

few belongings were making for the hills all around. Three long queues stretched into the surrounding streets from the North Station.

. . . . .

The crowds in the Metro were such that everybody had to stand all night long for two successive nights wedged body to body. (Yet the Metros were not safe from bombs; people would have been safer in their homes.) For several weeks after, it was necessary to open the trains on one side only, so as to leave the other platforms for the campers who would not leave.

It must not be supposed for a moment that the morale of Barcelona was at the beginning lower than a good average. I saw some dozen raids before the March ones and the impression I got was of a populace which refused to take reasonable care of itself. They would not take shelter. They preferred instead to blacken every balcony so as to get a good view of the bursting shrapnel. Their attitude was the perfectly reasonable one of unprotected people, "If we are hit, we are hit." The significant thing about the March raids was that whereas it was just as true as ever that "If we are hit, we are hit," people's bodies took them willy-nilly to the horrible atmosphere of the Metro.

. . . . .

Things were different in March. Human reactions then were not even on the level of reasonable fear, nor of reasonable anger against the bombers, or against the Government. . . .

. . . . .

It may be taken as axiomatic that the population will always confuse bombs and anti-aircraft fire and be as affected by one as by the other, unless special pains are taken to help them.

[Many believed the bombs were of a new type employing liquid air, because the effects were supposed to have been worse than in other raids. This was not so.]<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>For example, Clare Boothe in her book, Europe in the Spring, 1940, mentions a conversation, at which Vincent Sheean

What made the bombs seem worse was the technique in conjunction with which they were used. It was Silent Approach repeated again and again that heightened the effect on the people's nerves. Everybody believed that they were in the centre of the worst part of the raids.

. . . . .  
 [Loss of sleep was great during the raids.] To begin with nobody slept during two nights, and a city from which sleep had been banished for 48 hours is a city on its way to disintegration. . . . Waking consciousness passed into a hypnogogic state.

. . . . .  
 My general impression after talking to a great many people is that a consciousness of personal danger from the bombs was never their uppermost feeling or memory. It would seem that they were pounded into a dazed condition by the experience, and most of all by the noise, and that having reached that condition some one exterior detail, not directly concerning their own comfort or safety, but doubtless linking up with some significant episode of their past emotional history took complete possession of their minds.<sup>43</sup>

It would take a psychologist to assess the estimates Langdon-Davies makes in these pages. Haldane disputes the emphasis put on these intangible effects of the raids in these words:

. . . I think Mr. Langdon-Davies overestimates the psychological effect of the raids. According to my information the majority of the people of Barcelona remained fairly calm, though work was stopped in most factories. And so far were the people from being completely demoralized, that within a few days a mass

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was present, in which it was taken for granted by all participating that liquid air bombs had been used in Spain during the Civil War. P 13. There is no evidence that any such bombs were used at any time during that war.

<sup>43</sup>Langdon-Davies, op. cit., pp 45, 83-84, 94-95.

demonstration whose number has been estimated at half a million marched through the streets demanding the continuation of the war.<sup>44</sup>

He further expresses his opinion that Langdon-Davies was wrong in saying that the Metro was not safe from bombing and that the citizens would have been more protected had they remained in their homes, since the chances of a direct hit upon a Metro station was small.<sup>45</sup>

Under what Time called "modified Douhet methods," Barcelona had been subjected to "day after day of the heaviest, most destructive, most deadly bombing ever achieved." The report continued: "In accordance with Douhet, the objective was considered to be the whole city: the shattering of the morale of its people and the Leftist Government. Thus no particular targets were aimed at and every quarter of Barcelona, slums, palatial avenues, business quarters and parks, received the bombs."<sup>46</sup> Herbert L. Matthews, who had kept cabling to his papers during the twenty months of the war "that bombs only temper the morale of the people and spur them to greater resistance," wrote, "Human beings are not built to withstand such horror . . . [such bombing] makes one either hysterical or on the verge of hysteria . . . [under these conditions it

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<sup>44</sup>Haldane, op. cit., p 286,

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Time, XXXI:15-16, 28 Mar 1938.

is/ hard to remain sane."<sup>47</sup>

However, the morale of the Barcelona citizenry apparently held up under the raids, though its resilience was severely tested. Duncan Sandys, British parliament member, reported to the London Daily Telegraph that the damage from the bombings was so great that the people at first believed, as has been indicated, that some new, more horrible explosive had been used upon them as an experiment by the Insurgent flyers. Experts said this was not so, that better methods of manufacturing techniques were responsible for the deadliness of the bombs. The population of Barcelona, Sandys asserted, was not discouraged, and did not despair of ultimate victory for the Loyalist side. Their morale was not yet beaten down. Normal life continued in the city, but under tension. The working class population had largely abandoned the slum areas and were living in the Metro stations by night.<sup>48</sup> This view was supported by several other writers, among them the French general Duval who published his book on the lessons of the war in Spain just after the Barcelona raids.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p 16.

<sup>48</sup>Excerpts from articles by Sandys in the Daily Telegraph of 8 and 9 Apr 1938 were reprinted in the Bulletin Quotidien de la Presse Etrangère, issued by the French Foreign Office, and digested in P. E., "Les Bombardements aériens de Barcelone," Revue de l'Armée de l'Air, X:691-696, Jun 1938.

<sup>49</sup>See "Les Leçons de la guerre d'Espagne," Revue de l'Armée de l'Air, X:717-720, Jun 1938, which is a review of Gen Duval's book of the same title.



World opinion, outside of Germany and Italy, was as vociferous in its denunciations of the Insurgent action in bombing Barcelona's civilians as it had been in the case of the Guernica raid. The governments of Britain and France protested to General Franco. He replied that "while he recognized the humanitarian motives which inspired the protest and regretted the loss of innocent lives, Barcelona constituted an important military objective owing to the number of factories, industrial undertakings, and military concerns within the confines of the city. He would continue to endeavour to restrict aerial activity in towns," he went on, "and would only employ such means when military necessity left no alternative."<sup>50</sup> Yet, according to the Duchess of Atholl, Prime Minister Chamberlain's expressions of "'horror and disgust'" at the conduct of the Insurgents "ended raids on Barcelona for a time. . . ."<sup>51</sup>

It was the opinion of Vincent Sheean that:

. . . either the outcry that was raised in the world at large, or some lingering remnant of humane feeling, or perhaps even a strong protest from General Franco and his junta, kept the Italians from repeating this exploit, and although all the cities of Republican Spain were repeatedly bombed thereafter, and many villages destroyed, the foreign aircraft did not actually bomb the crowded

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<sup>50</sup>"The International Situation: The Spanish Civil War," Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, LXXXIII:407, May 1938.

<sup>51</sup>Atholl, Searchlight on Spain, p 253.

center of Barcelona so intensively again.<sup>52</sup>

What caused the Insurgent forces to moderate their attacks on Barcelona is not entirely clear. Possibly the leaders of the foreign aviation complements were satisfied with their experiments in mass bombardment and did not wish to attempt further developments at the time.

Heavy as they were, the March raids did not bring about the capitulation of the Catalan capital, and the emphasis of the Franco aerial attacks shifted elsewhere temporarily. In mid-May the Insurgent bombers returned and four severe raids in 33 hours left 200 dead and wounded in the city of Barcelona.<sup>53</sup> Langdon-Davies, who was present during these raids describes the effects of the attacks upon his associates, all of whom had been through the devastating March raids. He writes:

The people waiting at once began to display those motor reflexes which show that a mental system under strain is reverting to primitive un-coordinated movements in order to relieve the strain by action. Some were pale and still; others walked about rapidly; two women were sick; one or two looked about them at their companions with that inquiring look which denotes that the

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<sup>52</sup>Sheean, op. cit., p 240. Oliveira, op. cit., p 606, in speaking of the Franco-British protests, says, "Such an admonition to both aggressor and victim — which intentionally ignored the nationality of the airmen and aeroplanes causing the casualties — showed that Franco-British diplomacy could not cease from being perfidious over the Spanish question, even when it came to making a humanitarian gesture."

<sup>53</sup>Time, XXXI:15, 23 May 1938.

individual feels out of his depth and is looking for a lead from outside. On the other hand the people working continued to work for a minute or two and then stopped and went to the window and looked out. In the streets which had been only partly cleared the men were walking with a quickened pace, but the women in several instances seemed to be brought to a standstill and to be undecided as to where they should go. In none of these people was there any sign that the altered behavior pattern was conducive to any useful action. The people who were working bore up better than the ones who were waiting, but I had the impression that "business as usual" was an antidote for fear for at best a very short time.<sup>54</sup>

Further raids on Barcelona later in May produced heavy casualties, but none of the attacks had the intensity of those in March.<sup>55</sup>

Perhaps to draw attention from the March bombings of Barcelona, the Insurgent planes carried on small scale, but regular forays against less well-known towns such as Vinaroz, Reus, Torreblanca, Tarragona, Tortosa, Castellón, Sagunto, Almería, as well as on the larger cities of Valencia and Alicante, through April and May of 1938.<sup>56</sup> At Castellón de la Plana, a provincial capital and seaport 35 miles north of Valencia, two large-dimension raids in May produced a total death list of only six in a city of nearly 70,000,

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<sup>54</sup>Langdon-Davies, op. cit., pp 107-108.

<sup>55</sup>"The International Situation: The Spanish Civil War," Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, LXXXIII:621-623, Aug 1938. See also World Committee, op. cit., pp 44, 46.

<sup>56</sup>Vincent Sheean visited a number of these towns at the time and describes raids and the effects of raids on Castellón de la Plana, Alicante, Sagunto, Torreblanca, and Tortosa, among others, in his book. Op. cit., pp 71, 144-148.

although the center of town was bombed on each occasion.<sup>57</sup> The low death toll was attributed to greatly improved air raid shelters — "'A refugio in every house'" — built by the citizens themselves.<sup>58</sup> Between 25 and 30 May, 300 were killed in raids on Barcelona, Valencia, Castellón, Sargento, and Alicante, and Valencia was raided six times in twelve hours.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, General Alfredo Kindelán, commander of the Insurgent air forces, complained that "had the Rightist Air Force only been permitted [by Franco] to apply the Douhet Theory in good measure both Madrid and Barcelona would long since have fallen." In an article written after the March attacks, he criticised Franco's half-way measures and said, "'The Air Force . . . has had its wings clipped and its field of action restricted to tactical and strategic objectives, and occasionally factories, power stations, arsenals and lines of communication.'"<sup>60</sup> Certainly Franco's

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<sup>57</sup>Haldane, op. cit., p 170. Fifty planes dropped 450 bombs in the first raid, killing one person; 19 Junkers dropped 180 bombs in the second raid, destroying 60 houses and a civilian hospital, but all five fatalities were at the hospital. See World Committee, op. cit., p 46.

<sup>58</sup>Haldane, op. cit., pp 170-172. See also Sheean, op. cit., pp 144-147; and Spaulding, op. cit., p 74.

<sup>59</sup>Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, LXXXIII:623, Aug 1938. Sargento may be Sagunto, which was raided frequently at this time. For accounts of conditions in Valencia during these days see Sheean, op. cit., pp 140-141, 159; and also a mention in Spaulding, op. cit., p 91.

<sup>60</sup>Time, XXXI:15, 23 May 1938.

action in easing the aerial bombardment of civilian centers was not wholly humanitarian; it might have stemmed partially from a knowledge that his troops were gradually wearing down the ability of the Loyalists to hold out in their few remaining large cities and from his unwillingness to wreck these important industrial and transportation centers beyond the point where they would be useful to him when captured.

Ernest Hemingway, observing the Insurgent advance along the Mediterranean coast, saw the evacuation of Reus, a rail junction and industrial town six miles in from the coast and close to Tarragona, in early April. But he remarked the absence of panic as the crowds of women, children, and old men mingled with the troops, all looking up at the sky as they retreated, fleeing from the raiding planes.<sup>61</sup> Entering the town shortly after the Insurgent planes had disappeared he found destruction everywhere; but among the refugees, "There was no panic at all, only a steady movement, and many of the people seemed cheerful. But perhaps it was the day. The day was so lovely that it seems ridiculous that anyone should ever die."<sup>62</sup> A few days later Hemingway witnessed the bombing of Tortosa, a good-sized town near the delta of the Ebro River about 35 miles south of Tarragona. "Driving

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<sup>61</sup>Hemingway, op. cit., pp 52-54.

<sup>62</sup>Id. Hemingway, "Hemingway Reports Spain," New Republic, LXXXIV:350, 27 Apr 1938.

through the streets [of the bombed town] was like mountaineering in the craters of the moon," he wrote, but he noticed no panic among the evacuees.<sup>63</sup>

Alicante had a series of raids on 25 May 1938, most of them, according to a Report of the British Commission of Investigation, "'deliberate attacks on a civilian area of a town,'" killing 290 and injuring 295.<sup>64</sup> Sagunto, another coastal town 15 miles north of Valencia, boasted that it had withstood the Insurgent bombings better than most Mediterranean cities. In almost two years of war, up to June 1938, it was reported, Sagunto had undergone 138 attacks, but it had not succumbed and "the munitions workers of the city had not lost a single hour's work."<sup>65</sup> Sheean calls the "story of Sagunto . . . one of the most remarkable of the war." According to him, the workers had been offered relief if

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<sup>63</sup>Hemingway, The Spanish War, p 65. For an especially graphic description of the action around Tortosa, 5-18 Apr 1938, see ibid., pp 57-66. See also E. Hemingway, "Hemingway Reports Spain," New Republic, LXXXV:124-126, 8 Jun 1938, for much the same account. Sheean, op. cit., pp 71-72, also describes the effects of raids on Tortosa at this time.

<sup>64</sup>"Legitimate Targets in Spain," The Aeroplane, LV:280, 7 Sep 1938. See also World Committee, op. cit., p 46; and Sheean, op. cit., p 145.

<sup>65</sup>Haldane, op. cit., p 74. "It was only made possible for Sagunto because, during the first months of the war, the workers of Sagunto spent a great deal of time, during which they could have been making munitions, in organizing themselves on a democratic basis which has enabled them to stand up to suffering and danger which men organized on a capitalistic basis cannot stand." Ibid.

they wanted to move to a less punished area, but had elected to stay at their posts in the munitions factory, in spite of the fact that one bomb would have sent the plant into kingdom come. The town had been blasted again and again and hundreds of civilians killed. But the arms factory had not been hit, and the workers chose to carry on with their labors of making munitions for the Loyalist fighters, even in the face of obvious dangers.<sup>66</sup>

One of the worst raids of the late Spring took place at Granollers, a small town just north of Barcelona, on 31 May. The dead numbered 200, and 300 were wounded, mostly women and children.<sup>67</sup> There were almost daily raids through June, but only one of these, that against Alicante on the 25th, killed as many as 100 persons. The World Committee against War and Fascism lists 109 raids on open cities during the month and 2 June is the only day for which no attack is cited.<sup>68</sup> For the first six months of 1938, this recording lists 544 bombardments of open towns, the highest number for any six month period during the war. While not all these were aerial bombardments, the majority of them are included

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<sup>66</sup>Sheean, op. cit., pp 147-148.

<sup>67</sup>World Committee, op. cit., p 46. See also Oliveira, op. cit., p 605; and Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, LXXXIII:623, Aug 1938. Salter, op. cit., pp 184-185, says the casualties numbered 3,000, but this figure seems high.

<sup>68</sup>World Committee, op. cit., pp 47-49.

in that category.<sup>69</sup>

An interview with General Franco at Saragossa by a British journalist on 27 June 1938 brought forth some comments by the Insurgent leader on the subject of aerial raids upon civilian populations. Franco denied that his forces had engaged in deliberate bombings of civilians, but admitted that some deaths had occurred incidental to the bombing of harbors and other military objectives. These deaths, he said, were unintended and regrettable. To avoid them, he suggested, the Loyalists should evacuate civilians from areas likely to be attacked as legitimate military objectives. This humane solution to the problem, according to Franco, would end the needless carnage, but, he was sorry to say, the Barcelona authorities would not cooperate by ordering evacuation "since they need atrocity stories as propaganda."<sup>70</sup>

The Insurgent bombings of the Spring of 1938 brought suggestions that the Loyalists might retaliate by sending their planes against German and Italian cities. There was no comment from the Germans, but it was reported that Mussolini was indignant at the apparent temerity of the Spanish

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp 50-51. The figures for six month periods are as follows:

1936 July - December	99
1937 January - June	182
1937 July - December	229
1938 January - June	544

<sup>70</sup>"The Bombing Revolution," The Aeroplane, LV:1, 6 Jul 1938, quoting the London Times, 28 Jun 1938.



Republicans.<sup>71</sup> Nothing, seems to have come of this suggestion, and the Republican Government's air force continued the policy of concentrating its limited efforts to support of the ground troops and of fighting the Insurgent aircraft over the front lines. At the same time, Franco's air forces slackened their attacks against the coastal cities. One suggested reason was the unwillingness of General Franco "to smash up towns and cities which [would] . . . be national assets" when he won ultimate victory over the dwindling Republican armies.<sup>72</sup>

Alicante received the weight of the attacks in August and September, Tarragona in early November, and Barcelona for the remainder of the year.<sup>73</sup> All through the autumn, visits were paid by Insurgent bombers to the Loyalist fringe along the Mediterranean, but few of these attacks were severe in nature.<sup>74</sup> In November, General Franco is reported to have

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<sup>71</sup>"Bombs Fall on Spain," New Republic, LXXXV:233, 6 Jul 1938. "Mussolini, filled with horror at the thought that Spanish airplanes might do to Italians what Italian and German airplanes have been doing to Spaniards threatened by way of reprisal to send his grand fleet to bombard Loyalist cities on the Mediterranean coast." Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>"Somewhere in Catalonia," The Aeroplane, LV:497, 26 Oct 1938.

<sup>73</sup>Spaight, op. cit., 3rd ed., p 255.

<sup>74</sup>On 5-6 Oct 1938 Barcelona was bombed, but damage was only superficial. One pro-Franco writer claims that the bombing was a "simulated" one by Loyalist planes "in honor" of a visiting League of Nations delegation in the city at the time to control demobilization of the International Brigade which had been fighting on the Loyalist side. Cremascoli, op. cit., p 86.

published a list of 150 Catalan towns which would be bombed unless the Loyalists capitulated. Beginning in December, thirty of these towns were raided and in five days some 300 civilians were killed and 1,000 wounded. When the main Insurgent offensive against the Loyalist army was launched on 23 December these attacks ceased, although the Insurgents "continued to bomb very heavily the towns next in the line of retreat and also the refugees, both military and civilians, from these towns."<sup>75</sup> Barcelona became the chief target of these raids as the offensive carried forward through the province of Catalonia.<sup>76</sup>

Early in the new year it became evident that Barcelona could not hold out much longer. Food shortages and overcrowding were contributing to the weakening of the city's position.<sup>77</sup> Civilian morale was "beginning to break under the strain of over two years of war, with its constant record of defeat, carried on without any adequate outside aid and with the accumulative effects of aerial bombardment beginning

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<sup>75</sup>Pierce, op. cit., p 199.

<sup>76</sup>Cremascoli, op. cit., p 87. He says some of these bombings were by the "Red" air forces to cloak the weakness of the Loyalists and to strengthen the wavering Catalans who were discussing capitulation to Franco. Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Salter, op. cit., pp 228-229, says an estimated 62,000 persons died "from the indirect cause of hunger" in Barcelona between 1 Sep 1938 and 1 Feb 1939.

to tell."<sup>78</sup> Daytime raids by Italian Savoias shuttling from Palma, and nightly attacks by Heinkels based on Pollinsa, also in the Balearic Islands, kept the city in a constant state of alert and caused mobs of refugees to flee along the French frontier.<sup>79</sup> There were fifteen raids between 20 and 22 January 1939.<sup>80</sup> On the 24th and 25th there were eighteen raids. According to Oliveira, "Privations of all kinds, wide-spread suffering, and, above all, the sudden end to the hope of containing the enemy in the mountains conspired together to announce the end of Republican resistance in Catalonia."<sup>81</sup> The city fell to the Franco forces on 26 January, leaving Valencia and Alicante as the only sizable Mediterranean towns still in Loyalist hands.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Pierce, op. cit., p 199. See also, Del Vayo, op. cit., pp 280-281.

<sup>79</sup>Del Vayo, op. cit., p 280. See also Wilson, op. cit., p 242.

<sup>80</sup>"Raids on Barcelona in January 1939 were . . . said to have had a great effect on the inhabitants' minds, partly, however, because the anti-aircraft defences had already ceased to function and the Republican armies in Catalonia were already facing defeat." K. Duff, "The War in Spain and Its Repercussions, (i) The Course of the War in Spain," Survey of International Affairs, 1938, 1941, I:271-272.

<sup>81</sup>Oliveira, op. cit., p 633. Tarragona had fallen to the Italians on 15 Jan. Ibid., p 632. See also Salter, op. cit., pp 238, 262; and H. Tiltman, "Guest of General Franco," in R. S. Benjamin, ed., Eye Witness, 1940, p 213.

<sup>82</sup>Salter, op. cit., pp 247-250, has a good account of the last hours in Barcelona before the city surrendered.

As the refugees clogged the roads to France, the Italian and German planes followed them and harassed the retreating columns of soldiers and civilians. "It is reported that when a few Spanish Government fighters crossed over the refugee columns to engage some Insurgent bombers, the panic-stricken refugees ran shrieking into the ditch on the roadside. Only those who were too weary to care marched on for the French border."<sup>83</sup> General Franco had refused to accept the French proposal, transmitted by the Vatican, that a neutral zone of asylum for refugees be created on Spanish soil.<sup>84</sup> As Oliveira comments: "By their flight, the Spanish people announced, as clearly as if a plebiscite had been taken, that they preferred expatriation to life under the infamous government of the rebels."<sup>85</sup> But with no refuge closer than the French frontier, they had little choice.

In contrast to the breakdown of civilian morale in Barcelona, the remnants of the Loyalist government, who rallied at Alicante in early February under Prime Minister Negrin and Foreign Minister Del Vayo, found that "absolute calm reigned, and there was not the slightest sign of disorder." According to Del Vayo, the ministers, "Arriving

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<sup>83</sup>Pierce, *op. cit.*, p 200. See also Palencia, *op. cit.*, pp 38-39; and Oliveira, *op. cit.*, p 633.

<sup>84</sup>*Militär-Wochenblatt*, CXXIII:3, 27 Jan 1939.

<sup>85</sup>Oliveira, *op. cit.*, p 633.

from Catalonia, troubled and oppressed by the memory of a multitude panic-stricken at the thought of falling into the hands of the hateful enemy, . . . were heartened and refreshed by this evidence of calmness and self control."<sup>86</sup> At Valencia, too, morale was still good, although in a raid on 15 February, the son of the American Ambassador to Great Britain, Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., observed that an air of fatalism had engulfed the population of the town. There was no undue excitement, he said; many persons did not even seek the shelters and almost all went about their business as soon as the planes had disappeared.<sup>87</sup>

However, the Loyalist government was wracked by internal discord and could not hold the dissenting factions together any longer. On 28 March 1939, Madrid surrendered to General Franco and the following day the remaining Loyalist territories throughout Spain capitulated. The war which had washed in a bloody tide over the Peninsula for thirty-two months was over. The planes which had rained destruction on civilians from the Bay of Biscay to the Mediterranean were grounded, or went back to their German and Italian bases where their crews received the thanks of the Nazi and Fascist leaders. And the ruins of a hundred Spanish cities gave testimony to

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<sup>86</sup>Del Vayo, op. cit., p 291.

<sup>87</sup>J. P. Kennedy, Jr., "'Here They Come!'" Atlantic Monthly, CLXIV:545-546, Oct 1939.

the power which aerial bombs carried in their cargoes of high explosives and incendiary chemicals. But the discussion of the lessons of the war, and the examination of the effects of aerial bombardment upon civilian morale continued while the world was still "at peace."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

From the foregoing recitals of the effects of specific bombing raids upon the civilian populations of a number of Spanish towns and villages during the civil war of 1936-1939, it should be evident that no simple statement is possible as to the degree to which such bombardments contributed to the victory of the Insurgent forces under General Francisco Franco, or to the defeat suffered by the Loyalist supporters of the Republican government. Bilbao and Barcelona would seem to be the only major cities which surrendered as an indirect result of the aerial punishment they took. At Malaga, air attack may have been a remotely contributory cause of capitulation. Madrid, Alicante, and Valencia were all heavily bombed, but they held out to the end of the war and fell finally as the result of what might be called "normal causes attendant upon the collapse of the Republican war effort." In round numbers, the war's thirty-two months of conflict cost more than a million lives, military and civilian. Of these, 15,000 civilians died as a result of aerial bombardment of cities and smaller settlements. How many more deaths were directly or indirectly attributable to air raids is not known, but a fair proportion of the 300,000 non-battlefront fatalities could have occurred from

related causes.<sup>1</sup> Set beside one million deaths, the civilians who died as the result of aerial bombardment represent a meager portion. But a new weapon had more than proved its deadliness. The question is, had it proved anything else?

As one writer, in the midst of the war, put it:

In truth there is no lesson to draw for our special edification from the bombing activity . . . and writers do wrong who claim in golden periods that the bomber has had its futile say. . . . We think, and rightly so, that we [the British] are as enduring a race as any, although every other nation claims the same. But neither we nor they . . . have as yet been put to the acid test of intensive warfare from the skies.<sup>2</sup>

Just as the Spanish Civil War did not prove that the bombing plane was a decisive factor in defeating a nation or a segment of it, the war failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that aerial bombardments almost automatically stiffened civilian resistance. Numerous writers held this latter belief, even after the evidence, partially comforting to the opposition, of the breakdown of resistance at Barcelona in January 1939. Some of those writers have already been cited and to add to the catalogue here would be merely repetitious. However, a few observers, including some not already mentioned, made general comments upon the effects of aerial bombardments upon civilians, and their remarks,

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<sup>1</sup>These figures are from "The Spanish Civil War," The Command and Staff School Quarterly Review of Military Literature, XIX:30-33, Jun 1939.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. O. Charlton, United Services Review, LXXVII:8, 3 Mar 1938.



along with pertinent material from those who have spoken specifically, deserve examination before this subject is closed.

First, however, it seems important to say that most of the published comment is by military men, correspondents, literary figures, and political notables. There is not readily available nearly enough by psychologists, social analysts, and medical authorities, for example.<sup>3</sup> These individuals, many of whom took an active part in the conflict or visited the scenes of war as members of investigating committees, apparently have written mostly for professional journals. Files of medical publications might reveal much material not duplicated in the published books or general periodical articles dealing with the war.<sup>4</sup> Too, accounts by social and medical workers with relief organizations, including the International Red Cross, the Friends, the Foster Parents' Plan for War Children, and others, probably exist which

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<sup>3</sup>An isolated instance of a report by a medical man is H. Colmegna's Diario de un medico argentino en la guerra de Espana, 1936-1939, [n.d.], which, while it is pro-Franco, is observant. However, it says little about the effects of the war upon the civilians, and deals almost entirely with front line troops, or battlefield devastation.

<sup>4</sup>For example, references to several articles in the British medical journal The Lancet have been seen and examination of such articles as "Casualty Services in Barcelona," 12 Mar 1938, and "Towards Cadaver Blood Transfusions in War," 12 and 19 Mar 1938, in that periodical might be fruitful.

would throw more light upon these aspects of the war.<sup>5</sup> Something comparable to Dr. Meerloo's book on the experiences of the Dutch during the bombing of Rotterdam and under the occupation would be most helpful.<sup>6</sup> Men and women such as these have more than a casual knowledge of civilian reactions to aerial bombardments from the accounts of survivors to whom they have ministered and from their own firsthand observations.

One of the few psychologists who did speak up was Dr. E. B. Strauss who delivered a lecture on the subject to the Royal United Service Institution in London on 4 January 1939. In the course of his remarks, Dr. Strauss paid particular attention to the experiences of the Spanish people under bombardment. The war, he said, had "shown that the civilian population can become accustomed to air-raids with all their attendant horrors and danger to life, with the result that the number of acute psychiatric casualties is greatly reduced in the course of time." He added: "Nevertheless, a very unpleasant form of chronic anxiety state would appear to be becoming general in Barcelona, [then undergoing the last of

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<sup>5</sup>Some such materials are contained in Wilson, op. cit., passim, and in the Duchess of Atholl's, Searchlight on Spain, passim. Two books which treat in passing of the impact of aerial warfare upon children in Spain are A. Freud and D. Burlingham, War and Children, 1944, and A. Brauner, Ces Enfants ont vécu la guerre, 1946.

<sup>6</sup>A. M. Meerloo, Total War and the Human Mind, 1945.

the severe raids<sup>7</sup> a state which seems to be engendered not so much by the air-raids themselves, as by the population not knowing from one hour to another whether a raid is to be expected."<sup>7</sup>

Yet, Dr. Strauss continued, there is a positive side to aerial bombardment. The morale of Spanish civilians remained generally high. Here the lecturer cited that observers in Spain had noticed that "one of the most remarkable effects of the bombing of open towns in Government Spain has been the welding together into a formidable fighting force of groups of political factions who were previously at each other's throats." This might indicate, suggested Dr. Strauss, that the greatest utility of aerial bombardment would be, not the destruction of cities and lives, but the dropping of "millions of leaflets calculated to destroy . . . morale and encourage underground opposition."<sup>8</sup> As a forecast of the psychological warfare enterprises of the Second World War, this observation is interesting. But as a psychologist's analysis of the way aerial bombardment affected civilians, it leaves a great deal to be desired.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>E. B. Strauss, "The Psychological Effects of Bombing," Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, LXXXIV:276, May 1939.

<sup>8</sup>Loc. cit., pp 277-278.

<sup>9</sup>E. Mira, Psychiatry in War, 1943, although by an eminent Spaniard, is disappointingly devoid of comment on the Spanish Civil War.

For the materials which might have come from the interpreters of the mind and the body, it is necessary to turn to the so-called layman. One of the best analyses of what the earlier bombardments did to the civilian population of Barcelona is in a pamphlet, already cited, by a London A. R. P. officer, issued in the Spring of 1938. He opens his discussion with an examination of the value of the raids as a military measure and states the following:

If the object is solely to terrorise the civil population into submission, it has been abundantly proved that no matter how intense the bombardment, the morale of the whole of the population of a city cannot be broken — provided, of course, that passive defence measures have been properly organised. The reason is that an attack of this nature is entirely local and confined to the immediate vicinity of the impact of the bombs. The area of attack in the case of Barcelona, covered a potential target of forty square miles. There has been no stampede in mass of the whole of a nerve-racked population. No wild and unreasoned panic. No terrible and uncontrolled hysteria and certainly no thought of beseeching the Government to seek an immediate and unconditional peace.

If these were the military objectives aimed at, they have been proved to be unobtainable. Humanity is simply not built that way.<sup>10</sup>

As a lay observer, Major MacRoberts' examination of the psychological reactions of the Barcelona civilians is couched in non-medical terms. He stresses the fatalism with which these people regarded the protracted bombings. Developing this theme, he says:

Fatalism is not the worst characteristic to engender in wartime if it is allied to common sense and an indomitable spirit to survive.

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<sup>10</sup>MacRoberts, op. cit., pp 4-5. The italics are his.

Nature in an unaccountable way seems to strengthen mankind in war to endure untold hardships of mind and body.

The Spaniards have strong nerves; the rugged stock of Moorish ancestry has left a strain of iron in their souls which enables them to face hardships and disaster unflinchingly.

It takes a lot to still the life of a great city. It may pause momentarily, but its pulse quickly reasserts itself. During the periods of air attack, and in an abstract sense it is a continual struggle between life and death, each struggling for supremacy. For although death intervenes with grim and dramatic suddenness, nevertheless men and women must still go on living. Hunger and thirst urge on humanity to survive in spite of all.

Their houses and surroundings, their neighbours and friends, their daily occupations and everyday activities seem to hold the population of a great city like a magnet. They prefer to risk the possibility of death rather than be separated from life as they know it.

In aerial attack death and destruction arrive in an instant. Whether by day or night, without warning men, women, and children are hurled into eternity.

Life verily hangs by a thread.

This is perhaps the supreme characteristic of mass terrorism from the air against the defenceless population of a great city.<sup>11</sup>

After citing many incidents he witnessed, or which were reported to him, as illustrations of what he has said, Major MacRoberts concludes:

And yet, in spite of the terrible strain to which the whole population of the city had to submit for such an extended period of time, it must be openly and frankly testified that mass panic and hysteria had little general effect.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p 10.

The great mass of the harmless and inoffensive citizens of Barcelona, without any bias of strong political views either one way or the other — who have only asked to be allowed to continue their natural and legitimate occupations of work and industry, have been drawn helplessly and inevitably into the whirlpool of this terrible form of internecine warfare. And yet they have faced up to the ordeal of air-terrorism with a courage and endurance which should hold the admiration of the world.<sup>12</sup>

In MacRoberts' view, a partial explanation for this attitude of the people of Barcelona was the well-organized system of air-raid wardens. "This," he says, "is indeed the essence of the whole of the air raid precautions of Barcelona. It has become a tradition of service and as such it goes a long way to keep the morale of the people from breaking, for they know that, come what may, help will be brought to them. They will not be deserted in their hour of peril."<sup>13</sup> Equally sensible, in his view, was the practice of reserving accommodations in air-raid shelters for each and everyone entitled to use that specific refuge. "There is a lot to recommend such a system," MacRoberts writes. "It does away to a large extent with a panic overcrowding at any particular point. It also relieves the mind of anyone who for some reason may be late in arriving. He knows that under any circumstances his place will be reserved for him."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p 11.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p 18.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp 26-27.

Señor Del Vayo echoes these sentiments of Major Mac-Roberts. The Spanish political leader writes: "The greatest obstacle in the defence against aerial attacks is panic. Once this breaks out among the civil population, it is very difficult to control and often causes more victims than enemy bombs. Danger from panic can be reduced if there is an alarm system effective enough to inspire confidence in the people. On the Republican side the system of passive defence soon attained a very high degree of efficiency."<sup>15</sup> Only in the closing weeks of the war, as has been indicated, did the people of Barcelona succumb to the tendency to panic. And this was not entirely because of the air raids, since they were not at that time as severe as ones through which the population had passed with a considerable degree of equanimity.

That the temper of the civilians under aerial bombardment was not always one of fatalism or near-panic is testified to by several instances reported during the war when a certain sense of humor prevailed, in spite of the seriousness of the situation. Typical of these instances are the following. At Culera, a small village on the railroad line between Barcelona and the French border, the railroad bridge was bombed repeatedly, and, although not protected by anti-aircraft guns, sustained little damage because of faulty

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<sup>15</sup>Del Vayo, op. cit., p 203.

aiming by the bombers. The inhabitants of the village, provoked at the disruption of so many nights' sleep, were said to have been restrained with difficulty from themselves going out and dynamiting the bridge so they could get uninterrupted sleep and could, during the day, taunt the bombers with their inability to blow up the structure.<sup>16</sup> During the heavy bombings of Barcelona in 1938, according to Salter, "the Spanish retained some kind of grim humor." He tells this anecdote:

Negrin [Loyalist Prime Minister] had recently issued a new appeal, "Resist, resist, resist. To resist is to conquer." The next morning, in the center of the Plaza Cataluña, on a pile of rubble, was the corpse of a donkey, its ribs sticking through its scrofulous skin, dead, all too obviously, from starvation. Upon its side was pasted a sign which read, "Lo siento mucho, Senor Negrin, pero no puedo resistir mas," which means, "I'm extremely sorry, Senor Negrin, but I can't resist any more."<sup>17</sup>

Another example was cited that the "knowledge that it is foreigners who are bombing Spain has a particularly violent effect upon the Spanish reaction to air raids, but always the natural reaction of anyone to a raid is hatred against the pilots as men, whatever their side may be. As the British Conservative M. P. said during a Madrid raid when some Soviet pursuit planes flew over his head: 'Thank God they are ours.'"<sup>18</sup> But, as Langdon-Davies remarks the most common

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<sup>16</sup>Langdon-Davies, op. cit., p 22.

<sup>17</sup>Salter, op. cit., p 230.

<sup>18</sup>Langdon-Davies, op. cit., p 136. The italics are his.



reaction was anger. Writing of the 1937-1938 raids on Madrid, an American author observed: "Did the Madrileños sue for peace? No, they shook futile fists at the murderers in the sky and muttered, 'Swine.'"<sup>19</sup>

That the civilian behavior was better on occasions than that of the soldier, supposedly inured to the dangers of warfare, is illustrated by an isolated instance noted by the eminent Spanish psychiatrist, Dr. Emilio Mira. He commented upon the "abnormal fear reactions exhibited . . . by soldiers on leave." "During an air raid," he said, "these men, steeled to much more dangerous conditions at the front, did not know how to behave and could not even find the air raid shelters. As a result, they were much more afraid in the streets than in the firing line."<sup>20</sup> It would be interesting to have further evidence on this score, for, if it was widely true, the implication that civilian populations could withstand more aerial punishment than trained soldiers would have far-reaching effects upon the planning of psychological warfare for the future.

One French writer examined at length the various aspects of civilian reactions to aerial bombardment. He noted that fear was universal, that the nervous tension born of sustained

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<sup>19</sup>T. R. Phillips, "Preview of Armageddon," Saturday Evening Post, CCX:12, 12 Mar 1938.

<sup>20</sup>Mira, op. cit., p 37.

anxiety lessened the effectiveness of resistance among the people. But, he added, the inhabitants of the larger cities supported the agonies better than those of smaller towns, even though the bombardments of the former were usually more intense. For example, he said, the citizens of Madrid, Valencia, and Barcelona behaved better than those of the villages of Figueras and Junquera. His vivid description of the effects of aerial bombardment upon the men, women, and children of a typical Spanish town is too long to reproduce here, and, in general, it repeats much that has already been said. As he remarks, "Les commotionnés, les blessés, conserverent, comme une empreinte ineffaçable, l'horreur de bombardement."<sup>21</sup>

Claude G. Bowers, American Ambassador to Spain during the period of the civil war, is reported to have observed that at first civilians were thrown into a state of terror by the air raids, but that in a very short time they became used to the attacks and hardened to the terrors. His observations continued:

While they remained on the lookout for planes so that they might take shelter, there was a very noticeable diminution of hysteria or fear that was first in evidence.

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<sup>21</sup>Lt A. D., "La Guerre aérienne: Civils et combattants espagnols sous les bombardements aériens," Les Ailes, No 926, p 11, 16 Mar 1939. Italics in the original. See also the same writer's more technical article, "L'efficacité des bombardements en Espagne," Les Ailes, No 927, p 11, 23 Mar 1939.

The apparent purpose of testing aviation as an instrument for the breaking down of the civilian population has probably resulted in some disillusionment. Judging by the events in Spain, instead of breaking down the morale, the effect seemed to be very perceptibly a stiffening of the morale of the people — a rise in their resentment.<sup>22</sup>

From all sides, then, the lesson of the Spanish Civil War appears to have been that "air bombardment is not calculated to break the spirit of the people and assist to victory."<sup>23</sup> A German military authority, Colonel Rudolf von Xylander, who followed the war closely, agreed that "bombing from the air failed to demoralize civilian populations."<sup>24</sup> And a French writer echoed these observations with the remark that "Paradoxically, the civil population stands up very well to bombardment, and stubbornly refuses to evacuate towns

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<sup>22</sup>Remarks attributed to Ambassador Bowers by the New York Times, as quoted in Pierce, op. cit., pp 198-199. At no time was Mr. Bowers in a zone of heavy bombardment, but he may well have based his observations upon reports received from American diplomatic and consular officials who remained in such cities as Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao, etc. Spauling, op. cit., p 93, quotes substantially the same remarks.

<sup>23</sup>L. E. O. Charlton, United Services Review, LXXVII:7, 3 Mar 1938. He adds: ". . . even as the bombers are seen departing, and before the dead and dying have been extricated from the debris of the streets, a hardening of purpose to resist is felt on all sides, so that when order again succeeds chaos the ranks are more firmly closed than ever in a determination not to give in." Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Col R. von Xylander, "Lessons from Spain," The Command and Staff School Quarterly Review of Military Literature, XIX:33, June 1939.

bombed from the air."<sup>25</sup> Likewise, an American military commentator remarked, in speaking of the raids on Madrid during 1937 and 1938, "Franco has given the world one lesson of vast importance — that the murderous use of aviation on the euphemistically called political and economic objectives is futile — not only barbarous, but waste of a powerful weapon. Terrorism from the air has been tried and found wanting. Bombing, far from softening the civilian will, hardens it. Peace is not made willingly with murderers of women and children."<sup>26</sup>

While these observations were made in the midst of the war, and most of them before Barcelona fell, Franco apparently went on with a campaign of terrorization as a deliberate measure.<sup>27</sup> The pro-Loyalist New Republic stated in an

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<sup>25</sup>D. Poulain, "The Role of Aircraft in the Spanish Civil War," Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, LXXXIII:585, Aug 1938.

<sup>26</sup>Phillips, loc. cit., p 12. See also his article, "The New Face of War," Infantry Journal, XLV:387-392, Sep - Oct 1938, in which he says, "A prepared populace is immune to terror. . . . Attack from the air on populous centers no longer offers hope of surprise." P 387.

<sup>27</sup>Numerous writers accuse Franco of purposely resorting to intensive air bombardments of civilian centers. For example Koestler says: "Franco könnte nicht siegen ohne Terror, so wie er nicht siegen könnte ohne deutsche und italienische Ratgeber und Piloten, ohne seine Mauren und Fremdenlegionäre." Koestler, Menschenopfer, p 140. See also p 201 of the same book. Sender, op. cit., pp 203-204, says of the air raids, "Their first object was civic terrorism."

editorial that this stratagem was being pursued in an effort "to bring the war to an end by such excesses of cruelty that the defenders' spirit will be broken."<sup>28</sup> The editorial continued, ". . . in Spain the bombings by Italians and Germans have probably weakened Franco, since some of his Spanish followers have apparently been unable to stand calmly by and see Spanish women and children slaughtered."<sup>29</sup>

Early in the war an account appeared in the French journal L'Oeuvre to the effect that a Spanish flier had flown his plane to Alcala de Henares where he deserted to the Republican side, declaring that he was unable to participate further in the "criminal attacks of the Generals" against the civilian population of Madrid. He further said that the few Spanish pilots still fighting with the Rebels had hesitated to take part in the raids on Madrid for fear of causing

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<sup>28</sup>"Air Bombing and Hypocrisy," New Republic, LXXXV:141, 15 Jun 1938.

<sup>29</sup>ibid. Another editorial in the same issue, "The Strategy of Terrorism," asserts that the bombings by Franco's planes "are not popular in Nationalist Spain; in fact every attempt is made to keep them from becoming too widely known. Franco's excuse to the Pope that he did not approve but was unable to control his allies may have more truth in it than scoffers have believed. The extension of such raids into French territory lends color to the theory that they are being undertaken as part of a deliberate policy of terrorism on the part of the totalitarian powers, who know well that the air threat is the only military threat which they can at present make good against the great democracies. It is the bitter misfortune of the people of Loyalist Spain that they must serve as guinea pigs for this exposition of brutality." P 142.

casualties among their own families and friends, adding that consequently only German and Italian planes and pilots were being used in the bombing attacks upon the capital.<sup>30</sup> That there might have been something to the point of view expressed by the New Republic and others to the effect that Franco's attacks on civilian populations were alienating his Spanish adherents was seen in the action of the dismissal, and possible jailing, of General Juan Yagué, who was known to have opposed the civilian bombings as useless, and immoral. When he was restored to an important command in the Insurgent armies in September 1938, Time took occasion to voice the supposition that Franco had come around to acknowledging the futility, if not the immorality, of attacking civilians from the air. That Yagué was once again in good standing with Franco seemed to Time to be an indication that his more moderate ideas had been accepted and that the air war against cities might diminish.<sup>31</sup>

The general impression of writers in the later months of the war was that the bombardments of civilian areas were of doubtful military value.<sup>32</sup> As early as March 1938, the

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<sup>30</sup>From L'Oeuvre, 3 Nov 1936, quoted in Koestler, Menschenopfer, p 199.

<sup>31</sup>"War in Spain: Yague Restored," Time, XXXII:21, 19 Sep 1938. See also Plenn, op. cit., p 30, which mentions Yagué's early complaints against the use of Italian and German forces on the Rebel side.

<sup>32</sup>Del Vayo, op. cit., p 199. This view was reiterated as late as 1940 by W. G. Ryan in an article, "Air Raids Are

New Republic had editorialized:

The best military strategists oppose this type of ferocity on two grounds: first that instead of weakening the morale of civilian populations it is likely to harden their resolution and fire their hatred; second, that it leads to reprisal and destruction of the cities of the attacker.<sup>33</sup>

This view was supported by several military writers, even after the events of the war had more clearly demonstrated the destructive properties of aerial bombs. Major Hargreaves commented that "the attempt to cow the population of a big city by persistent air attack, if it does not attain its object within a very limited period, were better abandoned lest it generate a 'hate-fixation' (to employ the modern jargon), so fortifying to the general civilian morale as to constitute a definite asset."<sup>34</sup> General Niessel, writing in La France Militaire, calls such bombings "pointless,"<sup>35</sup> and a Swiss military observer wrote, "Both sides have had thousands of victims from bombs and still the decision of war is being obtained on the field of battle and no where else. One

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Overrated," American Mercury, XLIX:218-224, Feb 1940, in which he cites the failure of aircraft to accomplish the defeat of the Loyalists by bombing cities behind the lines. See especially pp 221-222.

<sup>33</sup>"Franco Exhibits Himself," New Republic, LXXXIV:205, 30 Mar 1938.

<sup>34</sup>R. Hargreaves, "Dress Rehearsal for the Next World War," Cavalry Journal, XLVIII:279, Jul - Aug 1939. Maj Hargreaves is a retired British officer.

<sup>35</sup>Niessel, loc. cit., p 101.

can draw the conclusion that the bombardment of cities violates the law of economy of force."<sup>36</sup> The French General Duval, author of two works on the Spanish war, comes to the same conclusion.<sup>37</sup> And, to complete this international round-up, General Anacleto Bronzuoli, of Italy, admits that the consequences of aerial bombardment were more destructive to the material wealth of the Spanish nation than in terms of the military opposition, although he qualifies this by saying that the results of the Barcelona raids of March 1938 give no comfort to the negative side of the thesis that aerial bombing demoralizes the civilian population.<sup>38</sup>

If these conclusions seem paradoxically inconclusive, it can only be said that, as was mentioned earlier, the Spanish Civil War was no proper test of the power of aviation to cow a civilian population into submission. Intensive air raids upon civilian centers were tried a number of times. But they were never attempted upon a wide enough scale to do more than destroy a single village like Guernica or terrorize an already weakened city like Barcelona. When intensive attack was employed, it was done so for only a brief period

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<sup>36</sup>Bauer, loc. cit., p 88.

<sup>37</sup>Gen Duval, Les Espagnols et la guerre d'Espagne, 1939, p 197. See also his Les Leçons de la guerre d'Espagne, especially p 229.

<sup>38</sup>Bronzuoli, loc. cit., pp 398-399. See T. Hamilton, Appeasement's Child, pp 24-34, for a very good analysis of the material damage of the war.



and the attacks ceased before they had proved much beyond the fact that a well-placed bomb is destructive of property and possibly deadly to humans, if they happened to be in the vicinity.<sup>39</sup>

Had the Insurgent air forces been large enough to have carried on mass raids against a number of Spanish cities at the same time the effect might have been different. However, with the separatism so characteristic of Spain, if Madrid was attacked severely, Barcelona, Valencia, and the Basque provinces might feel sympathy for the Madrileños, might strengthen their own defenses, and might even fill their army quotas more quickly. But they would not have been likely to entertain thoughts of capitulation because Madrid was being destroyed. Madrid was not destroyed, despite months of pounding by artillery and aerial bombs. So, when Bilbao fell, partly as the result of aerial attacks, Madrid used the time to manoeuvre politically and to thank its stars that the pressure on it had been relaxed. Because of policy, materiel weaknesses, or disunity, the Loyalist air arm never

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<sup>39</sup>There is every indication that the Luftwaffe used the Spanish episode as a testing ground for aviation, both in terms of men and materiel. Much which seemed inconclusive to observers of German aerial operations — and in the final analysis that meant all Rebel aviation — in Spain was attributable to the Nazi's deliberate unwillingness to tip their own hand prematurely. If they could create confusion in the minds of the enemy and of the neutrals as to the actual results of their aerial operations in Spain, this confusion played directly into their plans for the future.

approached the Insurgent-held cities with reprisal attacks of any consequence. And, because of this inequality, it should have been expected that the Insurgent attacks upon the civilian populations of Loyalist territories would have had more effect than they did. By all the rules, the Loyalists should have crumbled beneath the bombings of their towns and villages. In the main they did not; the war was won by Franco not over the bodies of bombed civilians, but in the council rooms of the international powers who bought and sold the opposing sides in Spain. The Spanish people, whether Loyalist, Insurgent, or neutral, were often called "the guinea pigs for the experimentors in aerial warfare." Unlike the actual laboratory animals, they gave their lives without advancing the cause of science, or the welfare of mankind. At the end of the Spanish Civil War the world still did not know the limits of tolerance within which civilian morale could withstand aerial bombardment.

Enough has been said to indicate that, between 1914 and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the world had something of a comprehension of what aerial bombardment of cities and towns could accomplish. The material destruction caused by high explosive and incendiary bombs was evident to all who could see — for news photographs, posters, and newsreels crossed all barriers of language. It was less easy to apprehend what aerial bombardment could do to the

minds and loyalties of civilians exposed to the actualities of air attack. In the European countries of World War I, in the villages of Abyssinia, and more particularly in the cities of China and Spain in the 1930s, thousands of relatively defenseless citizens came to know the terrors of bombing from the air. What these experiences did to the morale of the individual and to the national morale differed from country to country and from war to war. But, up to 1939, there was a certain similarity in the general reactions of the survivors. To sum up in a few observations, these reactions appeared to show that the human mind and the human character could absorb an amazing amount of physical punishment without giving way under the impact. If the lines between defiance and fear, between anger and panic were often indistinct, the wonder is that they were discernible at all.

J. T. Muirhead, writing at the time of the Spanish Civil War, said:

The primary object of aerial bombardment is a general interruption of industrial production and the undermining of morale by creation of an all-pervading sense of insecurity. The difficulties surrounding the maintenance of steady production, especially if increased by interruption of essential services, e. g., gas, electricity, water, etc., are liable to damage morale to a degree sufficient to interfere seriously with the industrial output of the country, and the mental outlook of its inhabitants. Morale is most effectively undermined by the fear of the unknown.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>J. T. Muirhead, Air Attack on Cities, 1938, pp 20-21.

Surely, if the citizens of the settled communities around the world were afraid of the unknown, that unknown should not have included a realization of what aerial bombs could do to their homes, their factories, their utilities, and their material possessions. What they had not learned was how far the human spirit could endure intense and constant bombardment from the skies. By 1939 most thinking individuals knew that wounds, injuries, deprivation of the common essentials of life, exposure, or even temporary discomfort caused by air raids could be borne — they had seen the Spaniards, the Chinese, the Ethiopians, and others suffer all these tribulations and still persist in standing up to the enemy. True, in each case surrender had finally come; but it came, not primarily because of aerial bombardment, although that may have been a contributory reason.

It was clear, or should have been to the military planners of 1939, that the role of aerial bombardment of cities in warfare remained uncertain. An assessment of its potentialities for physical damage was possible of achievement, although the findings were by no means conclusive. But the psychological implications of such warfare still had not been clarified to a point where any one could safely say that mass bombardment of civilians would either stiffen or break the will to resist. As a testing period, the years between 1914 and 1939 had no more than set up the preliminary

explorations and experiments. The Nazis took the lessons of Guernica, Barcelona, and other Spanish towns as an indication that mass bombardment was a potent weapon in the war of nerves and, of course, intensified their experiments in connection with the invasion of Poland less than eight months after the capitulation of Barcelona. An analysis of the psychological aspects of the air war which ensued — the attacks upon the Low Countries, on England, and later on Germany and Japan — is beyond the scope of this study. Already considerable literature has appeared which, in one way or another, attempts to estimate the morale factors of aerial bombardment in World War II. When conclusions are reached as to the impact of the air war upon the civilians of Europe and the Orient between 1939 and 1945, it is to be hoped that they will present a picture at once more clear and more instructive than it has been possible to obtain from the accounts of the air attacks upon civilians in the years from Sarajevo to the outbreak of World War II. From the beginning, aerial warfare has been a war against men's minds as well as against their persons and their possessions. Up to 1939, the mind of man, though at times benumbed and uncertain, was not defeated by aerial bombardment. After the lessons of World War II are examined it may be possible to predict with a degree of psychological exactness the lines beyond which individual and national morale may succumb to aerial bombardment of

cities. It does not appear from the experiences prior to 1939 that any such prediction was tenable when the Nazis moved against Poland.

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# ERRATA

<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	
9	3	For "billigerent" read "belligerent."
53	1	For "distrubing" read "disturbing."
57	15	For "costitute" read "constitute."
63	29	For "aerial" read "aërial."
63	30	For "aerial" read "aërial."
103	9	For "desireability" read "desirability."
115	16	For "explosives" read "explosive."
164	16	For "Time" read " <u>Time</u> ."
191	7	For "Consult" read "Consul."
202	16	For "Literary Digest" read " <u>Literary Digest</u> ."
205	3	For "South" read "south."
211	12	For "Madrilenos" read "Madrilenos."